

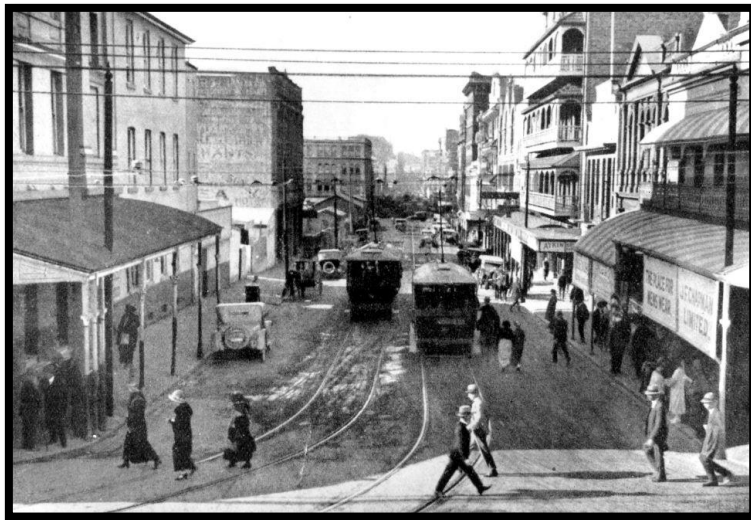
Urban Improvement in Brisbane between the Wars
An Architectural History of the Widening of Adelaide Street

1924 to 1931

by

John W. East

2019



Adelaide Street from George Street, 1922



Adelaide Street from George Street, 1934

CONTENTS

Map	1
Introduction	2

SECTION A: GENERAL

Planning the Streets of Brisbane	5
The Adelaide Street Improvements	8
Architectural Overview	15

SECTION B: BUILDINGS ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF ADELAIDE STREET

George Street to Albert Street:

A1. Hotel Daniell	19
A2. National Bank of Australasia	22
A3. Lennons Hotel annexe	24
A4. Kelvin House	26
A5. City Hall	29
A6. Albert Square (King George Square)	33

Albert Street to Edward Street:

B1. Hibernian Buildings	35
B2. Centennial Hall	38
B3. Globe Hotel	40
B4. Morris House	42
B5. Ewing House	44
B6. Bryce's Chambers	46
B7. Blocksidge & Ferguson	48
B8. Birmingham House	51
B9. Selbourne Chambers	53
B10. Bowman House	55

Edward Street to Creek Street:

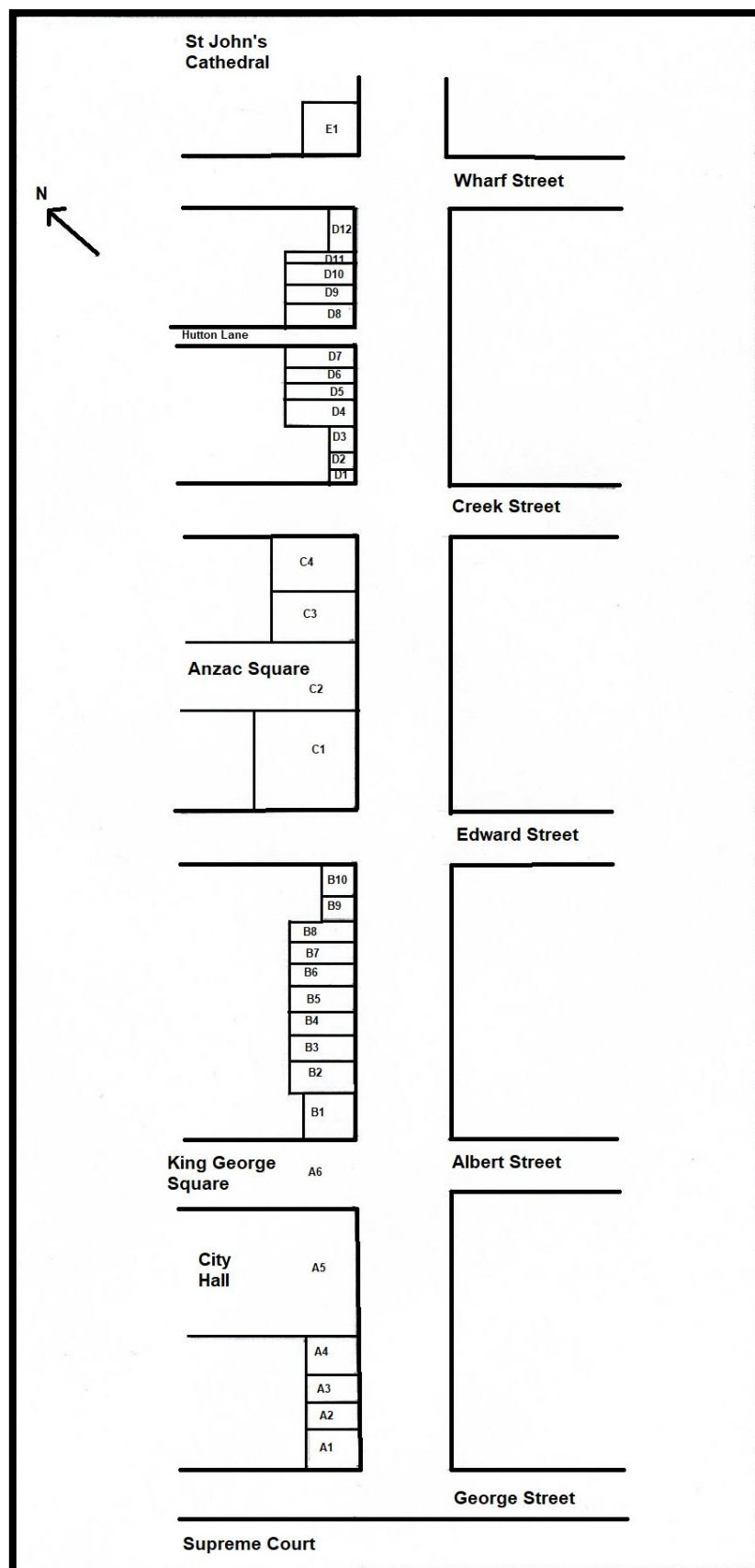
C1. State Government Offices	.	.	.	.	.	57
C2. Anzac Square	.	.	.	.	.	61
C3. Commonwealth Government Offices	.	.	.	.	.	65
C4. Terrica House	.	.	.	.	.	70

Creek Street to Wharf Street:

D1. New South Wales Mont de Piété	.	.	.	.	73
D2. Austin House	.	.	.	.	75
D3. Gordon & Gotch	.	.	.	.	77
D4. Butler Brothers	.	.	.	.	81
D5. YWCA	.	.	.	.	83
D6. Electrolux House	.	.	.	.	85
D7. Stotts Business College	.	.	.	.	86
D8. Harding Chambers	.	.	.	.	88
D9. Universal Motors	.	.	.	.	90
D10. Henry Berry & Co. (former premises)	.	.	.	.	92
D11. Victor Day	.	.	.	.	94
D12. Adelaide House	.	.	.	.	96

Wharf Street to Petrie Bight:

E1. Church of England buildings (Eton Private Hotel)	.	.	98
--	---	---	----



Sketch map of buildings on the western side of Adelaide Street, 1930s

For the names of the buildings, see the contents list above

Introduction

If bills could be delivered to the next world there would be a big one against Governor Gipps for street widening in Brisbane. Much of the work now being done in street widening in Brisbane is due to his lack of foresight.¹

There has been very little study of the commercial architecture of Brisbane during the 1920s. It might be argued that this is because the subject is of little inherent interest, but that would be unfair to the many talented architects working in the city at the time. To be sure, economic conditions and business confidence fluctuated during that decade, wedged as it was between a destructive world war and a desperate global financial emergency, but nonetheless there were those who were prepared to invest in Brisbane's commercial future during the 1920s, and the architectural profession was only too ready to support them. Of course, the largest commissions often went to the much-resented "southern architects" from the large Sydney and Melbourne firms, but the local practitioners were not always overlooked.

Brisbane was developing steadily during the 1920s, and the creation of the Greater Brisbane City Council in 1925 gave a significant boost to urban development. Brisbane became the only extended metropolitan area in Australia to fall under the administration of a single local authority, and this brought with it economies of scale and enhanced expertise, as evidenced by the appointment of Australia's first city planner in 1925.

The first large-scale urban improvement project undertaken by the Brisbane City Council was a scheme to widen Adelaide Street, as a first step towards rectifying the chronic traffic problems resulting from the lack of foresight in the original street-plan, which had been drawn up under instructions from the governor of New South Wales, Sir George Gipps, in 1842. This street-widening project, carried out between 1924 and 1931, involved the rebuilding, or remodelling, of all the buildings on the western side of Adelaide Street, from George Street to the cliff behind St John's Cathedral. In all, thirty-one buildings were involved.

For the architects of the day, this was something of a bonanza. It was also a boon for the future architectural historian, for it provides us with a large sample of Brisbane commercial architecture from a relatively short span of time. The purpose of the present study is to use those thirty-one buildings as a case-study of the commercial architecture of Brisbane during the 1920s.

The buildings include three large government buildings (City Hall, State Government Offices, and Commonwealth Government Offices) which were not built as part of the street-widening project, although they were erected during the lifetime of that project. In fact, the

¹ *Telegraph* (Brisbane), 14 January 1929, p.2.

street-widening would have been impossible without the co-operation of the three levels of government who willingly ceded land from these three sites, which collectively accounted for a considerable proportion of the western street-frontage of Adelaide Street. Quantitatively (because of their sheer size) and qualitatively (as government buildings, rather than commercial buildings) these three buildings are in a category quite distinct from the remaining buildings in the sample. Nonetheless, they have been included in this study so as to give a complete history of the buildings on the western side of Adelaide Street between the wars.

Apart from its interest for the architectural historian, the widening of Adelaide Street is also a significant episode in the development of town planning in Brisbane.

Fortunately the building registers of the Brisbane City Council for the period in question survive in their entirety, so at least a minimum of information is available on each of the buildings erected or remodelled as part of the project. For some buildings, further information is available in contemporary newspapers and trade magazines. Unfortunately architectural plans survive for only a few of the largest buildings in the sample. Even photographic evidence is lacking for some buildings. Like every other historian, the architectural historian has to work within the limitations of the available sources.

This study is arranged in two sections. The first section deals with the historical and planning background of the Adelaide Street improvements, and gives a brief summary of the project. It also deals in general terms with some architectural issues. The second section provides more detailed information on the buildings which emerged as a result of the project. Those buildings are discussed in sequential order, based on their street address, working from south to north, from George Street to the cliff behind St John's Cathedral, where the widening project terminated.

The author would like to express his gratitude to the staff of the Brisbane City Archives for their assistance. He is also greatly indebted to the many photographers, mostly deceased, whose work has been reproduced here.

SECTION A: GENERAL

Planning the Streets of Brisbane

Since the advent of automobilism the Parisian streets, like those of London, have proved too narrow ... In the more recently constructed streets the width has therefore been increased to 65 to 70 feet, with a road space of 40 feet ... The larger avenues and boulevards of the Hausmann type are nearly always 100 feet from house to house, with a road space of 45 feet, but even these fine streets get blocked when double tramways occupy the middle of the boulevard ... The modern tendency to economise time means an increase of speed, to accommodate which streets will eventually have to be provided with a road space of up to 65 feet.¹

These comments, from a 1911 publication by a British architect who had established himself as a leading exponent of the new science of "town planning," give us some idea of the traffic problems with which European cities were struggling at the beginning of the twentieth century.

It might well be thought that in Australia, at that time, the problems would have been much less acute, and in some cases this was certainly true. The street-layouts of the European cities had generally emerged during the Middle Ages, whereas most Australian cities had been established in the nineteenth century. Cities like Melbourne, Perth and particularly Adelaide, which had all been laid out as the capitals of new colonies which were to be populated by free settlers, had generally been well planned from the outset, typically using a rectangular street-layout which is now referred to as the "colonial urban grid." Even when tramways emerged as a form of mass urban transit at the end of the nineteenth century, the streets of these cities were wide enough to cope with this innovation, which partly explains why Melbourne never abandoned its trams, and why Adelaide is slowly reintroducing them.

However the situation was somewhat different in those Australian cities which had been founded as convict settlements, namely Sydney, Hobart and Brisbane. It has sometimes been said that the streets of Sydney were laid out by the drivers of bullock-wagons. Although this is not strictly correct, it is nonetheless true that the development of a convict settlement like Sydney was generally an ad hoc process. When administrators later attempted to impose some order upon the settlement, they were constrained by the existing structures, and the result was an improvisation which their successors have been endlessly tweaking ever since.

In Brisbane the situation was not as problematic as in Sydney, because the penal settlement established at Moreton Bay in 1825 was never very large. Even at its peak, in 1831, the combined civil, military and convict population was only slightly in excess of 1,200 souls. Thereafter the convict station was slowly wound down, and it finally closed in 1839, in preparation for the opening up of the Moreton Bay area to free settlement.

¹ H. Inigo Triggs, *Town Planning: Past, Present and Possible*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1911), p.123-4.

The original convict settlement was sited on an elevated ridge above flood-level, roughly corresponding to modern George and William Streets. As buildings were gradually erected, they were scattered along this ridge, connected by tracks which were slowly extended into the surrounding countryside to connect with the outstations south of the river and downstream at Eagle Farm.

It was the energetic commandant, Patrick Logan, who saw the potential of the spur which ran northwards at a right-angle to the riverside ridge. In 1827 he began to erect new prisoners' barracks here, and over the next few years a substantial stone structure gradually emerged, of two storeys, with a central tower rising to three storeys. It was easily the largest building in the settlement.

In 1839, surveyors were sent from Sydney to delineate plots of land to be sold to future free settlers, and by March 1840 Robert Dixon had completed a survey of Brisbane Town, in a grid pattern of square blocks, the streets having a width of one chain (i.e. 66 feet, or approximately 20 metres). As the convict barracks were far too substantial to be moved, this building was used as the alignment for the main street.



Old Convict Barracks, Queen Street, about 1870

At various times this building housed the State parliament and the Supreme Court, before being demolished in 1880.

However Dixon's plan was modified by Henry Wade, a recently-appointed surveyor with the New South Wales government, who was sent to Brisbane late in 1841. He changed the square blocks into rectangles, and widened the streets, some of them up to 1.4 chains (about 28 metres). He also provided public squares, and reserves to preserve access to the river bank. Unfortunately when Governor Gipps visited Brisbane on 24 March 1842, he vetoed many of these embellishments, being convinced that the town would never be of any great significance. He had the interesting notion that narrower streets would provide more shelter from the sun, so he reduced the width of the streets to one chain (66 feet or about 20 metres). An exception was subsequently made for the main thoroughfare, Queen Street, which was allowed a width of 80 feet (24 metres).



Detail from Wade's plan for Brisbane, 26 April 1842

This is not the final version. Queen Street is aligned with the Prisoners' Barracks. The government buildings which had already been erected on the river bank prevented the extension of Adelaide Street to the river. The upper course of Wheat Creek, which crossed the junction of Adelaide and Albert Streets, was made into a water reserve, thus preserving the site of the future City Hall.

The width of streets in the central area of the town was confirmed by a government decree in 1854. This specified that Queen Street would have a width of 79 feet and 2 inches, of which 55 feet and 2 inches would be carriageway. Most other streets, including Adelaide Street, would have a total width of 66 feet, of which 42 feet (12.8 metres) would be carriageway, allowing footways of 12 feet (3.7 metres) on either side.

Governor Gipps proved to be a poor prophet, and as the century progressed Brisbane slowly grew into a town of some size. Like Sydney, it was left to wrestle with streets which were increasingly proving to be too narrow. Dealing with this problem was both expensive and litigious. The Public Works Land Resumption Act of 1878 gave the City Council some powers in this area, but the process was cumbersome, and land prices in the main streets were steadily rising. The introduction of horse-drawn trams in 1885, followed by electric trams twelve years later, only exacerbated the problem.

The main tram lines through the city-centre ran along George and Queen Streets, with the latter street also absorbing the tram traffic from the southern and eastern suburbs, which crossed the river at the Victoria Bridge. Even with its greater width, Queen Street was becoming seriously congested by the early years of the twentieth century, and the private company which ran the tram network was advocating the development of a second route along Adelaide Street. The City Council opposed this move, arguing that Adelaide Street was too narrow, and that it was already carrying much of the vehicular traffic connecting the Petrie Bight wharf precinct with the main rail terminus and markets at Roma Street. In 1915 the State Government overrode the objections of the Brisbane City Council and gave the Brisbane Tramways Company permission to lay a double line of tram tracks down Adelaide

Street. It was now obvious that Adelaide Street would have to be widened, but the prospect of doing so was a daunting one.

The development of the town planning movement during the first decade of the twentieth century was a worldwide phenomenon, and in Brisbane a Queensland Town Planning Association was established in 1914. It was well supported by influential figures and was largely responsible for the City of Brisbane Improvement Act, passed in 1916 by the State Parliament, which was then dominated by a recently elected and radically minded Labor administration. The initial priority of this legislation was to facilitate the now inevitable widening of Adelaide Street, and those drafting it drew upon experience gained during the recent widening of Oxford Street in Sydney. The new act also paved the way for many subsequent improvement and beautification measures, funded by a loan of one million pounds which the City Council was authorised to raise.²

The Adelaide Street Improvements

The first trams began running along Adelaide Street in February 1917, and by early 1919 the City Council had made a definite decision to widen the street on its western side by a distance of 14 feet (about 4.3 metres), thus creating a total street-width of 80 feet (about 24.4 metres).

This was by far the most ambitious street-widening project yet seen in Brisbane. The length of Adelaide Street, from George Street to Petrie Bight, is about one kilometre, although the initial plan involved only the blocks between George and Creek Streets. Associated with this plan was a proposal to extend Adelaide Street from George Street to North Quay, but the continuing refusal of the State Government to relinquish the land which it occupied in George Street, at the southern end of Adelaide Street, frustrated that proposal until 1975.

Daunting as the task seemed, there were certain factors which worked in the Council's favour. The first of these was the large, undeveloped allotment on the southern side of Albert Street, stretching from Adelaide Street to Ann Street. This had originally been earmarked as a water reserve, and was now the designated site of the proposed city hall. The location and nature of this building had been debated for decades, but in 1919 the City Council had awarded the commission for its design to the local architectural firm of Hall and Prentice, and the plans were still in development when the street-widening project was approved.

Further north, in the block between Edward and Creek Streets, stood the venerable old Normal School, Brisbane's premier public primary school, on land owned by the State Government. This was a site overdue for redevelopment, and just next to it was a large allotment of land belonging to the Commonwealth Government, which had been used for military purposes. There were already plans to create a large public square in this block, as a

² For more information on the early planning of Brisbane, see J.R. Lavery, "Town Planning in Brisbane 1842-1925," *Royal Australian Planning Institute Journal*, vol.9 (January 1971), p.19-26.

war memorial, and both governments were agreeable to parting with a strip of land to permit the widening of Adelaide Street.

Armed with the powers conferred by the 1916 City of Brisbane Improvement Act, the Council began to resume the remaining properties on the western side of the street, beginning with the block from George to Albert Streets, and then progressing to the block from Albert to Edward Streets. This process was largely complete by early 1924. However in the final block, from Edward to Creek Streets, the Council encountered problems with the property on the corner of Adelaide and Creek Streets. This large allotment belonged to the Presbyterian Church, who were not satisfied with the compensation offered by the Council, and the matter ended in the Land Court, which in February 1925 found in favour of the Church.

Funding for these resumptions, and for the subsequent roadworks, came from a loan authorised by the State Government in June 1923. Although this was generally referred to as the "million pound loan," the sum borrowed was actually £750,000, and it also funded a large number of other city improvements.

The process of resumption proved to be controversial. In principle, the procedure followed was: firstly to value the property, secondly to resume it and pay the appropriate compensation, thirdly to reduce the allotment to the required size, and finally to sell the truncated allotment, with the stipulation that the purchaser would have to undertake the necessary rebuilding within a specified period of time. However, as we have seen, the valuations were open to challenge, and the Presbyterian Church was not the only landowner to have recourse to the Land Court. In some cases, the Council was able to sell the truncated property (with the encumbrance of a building which still had to be rebuilt) at a price similar to the amount paid in compensation, clearly suggesting that the valuation had been inadequate.

There were some landowners who were very keen to retain their properties, as they had been in business there for years and had built up a large clientele. In such cases, the Council agreed to resume the 14-foot strip only and pay compensation for that, and so leave the landowner with the remainder of the property, plus the task of rebuilding. In one such case, the owner was so eager to retain her land that she agreed to cede the 14-foot strip to the Council, without compensation.

The many complaints concerning the resumption process led the State Government to commission the Auditor-General to investigate the whole process. His report was released in February 1924 and did not find any evidence of malpractice on the part of the Council, although there were many who still felt that the process had been badly handled.

During the latter half of 1924 the western side of Adelaide Street between Albert and Edward Streets became a large building-site, as existing structures were either demolished and completely rebuilt or truncated and given new facades. Most of this work was complete by early 1925. However in the block between George and Albert Streets there was no urgency to

undertake rebuilding, as the new alignment could not be finalised until construction of the City Hall was complete, and that project was scheduled to take several years.

In October 1925, the old Brisbane City Council was superseded by the newly created Greater Brisbane City Council. This new body was responsible for the administration of the largest unified metropolitan area in Australia, and Brisbane remains the only state capital where a single local authority is responsible for both the central city area and an extensive belt of surrounding suburbs. The new council was fully committed to continuing the urban improvement projects initiated by its predecessor.

One of the interesting results of the establishment of the Greater Brisbane Council was the opportunities which it offered in terms of urban planning. Whereas large-scale planning in Melbourne and Sydney was hindered by the multiplicity of local authorities, Brisbane was now free of such constraints, and in 1925 Brisbane became the first city in Australia to appoint a city planner, William John Earle.

With the rebuilding of business premises complete, work could begin on the widening of the roadway between Albert and Creek Streets, and this task was completed by April 1926, but not without much inconvenience to business owners and the general public. The management of such a large project was without precedent in Brisbane, and as one local newspaper reported,

we were given a very striking demonstration of the lack of co-ordination that comes of having water, sewerage, gas, electricity, telephones, tramways, and street construction under different authorities ... It was not until a few days ago that the laying of the new pavement was completed, after at least six gangs had been and gone.³

The same writer was also very critical of the technology employed by the workmen, quoting a visiting engineer who had noted that "Queensland dearly loved the pick and shovel."

One valuable innovation was the removal of water, gas and electricity mains from the roadway. These were re-laid along the footway, so that when they required attention in future, it would not be necessary to dig up the road.

All in all, it was felt that the project had been a success, and the Council decided to continue with the widening of Adelaide Street beyond Creek Street to Petrie Bight. The process of resumption for this second phase began early in 1927, and to reduce the amount of compensation payable for disruption to business, property-owners were allowed ample time to relocate their activities. It was fortunate that some recently erected buildings in this area had already been constructed along the new alignment; the remainder of the rebuilding work was largely completed during 1929 and 1930.

³ *Daily Standard* (Brisbane), 8 March 1926, p.1.



Re-laying tram lines in Adelaide Street, early 1931

This was the final stage in the road-widening process. The photo is taken near the corner of Wharf Street. On the left, Adelaide House (D12) is being truncated. The tram signal cabin has already been erected on the awning at the corner.

However in the final block, between Wharf Street and Petrie Bight, the Council encountered the formidable problem posed by the cliff at the rear of the Anglican cathedral. To widen the street, this would have to be cut back, but to do so risked weakening the foundations of the massive cathedral building. Lengthy negotiations between the Council and the cathedral authorities ensued, and various schemes for underpinning the cathedral and constructing retaining walls were considered. The cost of this work was prohibitive, and the financial stringency imposed following the onset of the Great Depression late in 1929 finally removed any prospect of widening the street here. In 1932 some rounding-off of the cliff-face was undertaken, but to this day, this section of Adelaide Street remains unwidened.

The economic downturn after 1929 also meant that the Council was left with several resumed properties on its hands, for which it could find no buyer. In these cases, the Council was itself obliged to undertake the truncation of the buildings, and then attempt to at least find a tenant for the remodelled premises.

At much the same time, work was coming to an end at the other end of Adelaide Street, between George and Albert Streets. By March 1930 the Adelaide Street frontage of the City Hall was complete, and a wide footpath had been laid. The properties between the City Hall and George Street were rebuilt to the new alignment during 1930. By July 1931 the roadworks and relaying of tram tracks were complete, and Adelaide Street had been widened all the way from George Street to the northern corner of Wharf Street.



"Setting back" at the southern end of Adelaide Street, 1930

The City Hall had recently been completed and work had begun on truncating the Hotel Daniell (A1) and Imperial Chambers, soon to be renamed Kelvin House (A4)

The total cost of the project was something in the vicinity of £280,000, the vast majority of which had been expended in compensation for resumptions. Had it been worthwhile?

Certainly there were those who spoke glowingly of the transformation of Adelaide Street, although Alderman Warmington was surely exaggerating when he asserted that "a few years ago one was absolutely afraid to go down Adelaide Street."⁴ A more measured assessment from the leading real estate agent, James T. Isles, suggested that Adelaide Street might soon overtake Queen Street as the city's main thoroughfare. Isles pointed to the fact that more tram passengers were now alighting in Adelaide Street than in Queen Street, and he drew attention to the attractive public spaces being developed off Adelaide Street, at Anzac Square and in front of the new City Hall. He concluded that "I know of no street in the Commonwealth which contains such a variety of public buildings in an important commercial street."⁵

On the other hand, there were those who felt that the widening of the street had brought little benefit. Town planning in Brisbane was barely in its infancy, and even large projects like this one were just piecemeal measures, which did not form part of any comprehensive vision for the improvement of the city. As one newspaper commented,

⁴ *Courier-Mail*, 3 October 1934, p.14.

⁵ *Truth* (Brisbane), 26 May 1929, p.13.

although Adelaide Street has been widened by 14 feet ... very little real benefit has been gained by the improvement, for at each end the road leads into the original bottleneck, with a consequent serious congestion to traffic.⁶

Another problem was that the project had coincided with the first boom in car ownership in Australia. Complaints were being made that the benefits from widening the street were disappearing, as parked cars became a permanent feature on both sides of the roadway. There was outrage in 1927, when the city planner suggested that the parking of cars be banned in Adelaide Street, and all the more so as the northern end of that street had established itself as the centre of the Brisbane automobile market. By 1931, the City Council was considering the radical step of charging for parking in city streets, a policy which had already been implemented in Melbourne. However this proposal was premature, and parking meters were not introduced in Brisbane until 1957.

In other cities where street-widening had been undertaken, there had often been an important secondary objective of opening up impressive new vistas. The Adelaide Street project had never been so ambitious, for as we have seen, it was driven purely by the need to accommodate increasing volumes of traffic (and especially tram traffic). Although no new vistas were created during the widening of Adelaide Street, it should be noted that, over the following decades, most of the many proposals for the extension of Adelaide Street to North Quay incorporated some form of large public space fronting the river. Sadly, this never eventuated.

It is also interesting to note a newspaper editorial from 1932, criticising the failure to make any plantings as part of the widening scheme:

Instead of the present bare wideness the citizens could have had a street which would at least have indicated that Brisbane was a city close to the tropics and their luxuriant vegetation.⁷

It would take at least another three decades for the Brisbane civic authorities to begin to appreciate the important contribution which street-trees could make to the amenity of the built environment.

During the 1930s, and well into the post-war period, plans for completion of the widening of Adelaide Street to Petrie Bight were regularly revived, often in conjunction with proposals for the extension of the street at the other end, to connect with North Quay. However in the 1960s the City Council began a radical redesign of traffic flows in the central business district, and the new riverside expressway was erected with connections to the redesigned Turbot and Ann Streets, which thus became the main arterial roads through the city centre. Traffic congestion in Adelaide Street decreased noticeably, especially after 1969, following

⁶ *Daily Mail* (Brisbane), 9 April 1926, p.6.

⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 3 November 1932, p.10.

the withdrawal of the trams, whose introduction had given the original impetus to the widening project.

Today Adelaide Street remains an important public-transport corridor for the city's bus network, but otherwise it carries little more than local traffic. In recent years, sections of the roadway have been narrowed, to provide wider footways and allow the planting of street-trees. Of the buildings erected along the western side during the 1920s and 1930s, the three large government buildings have survived, but only a handful of the others remain, and they provide welcome relief from the cavernous skyscrapers which now loom over the street.



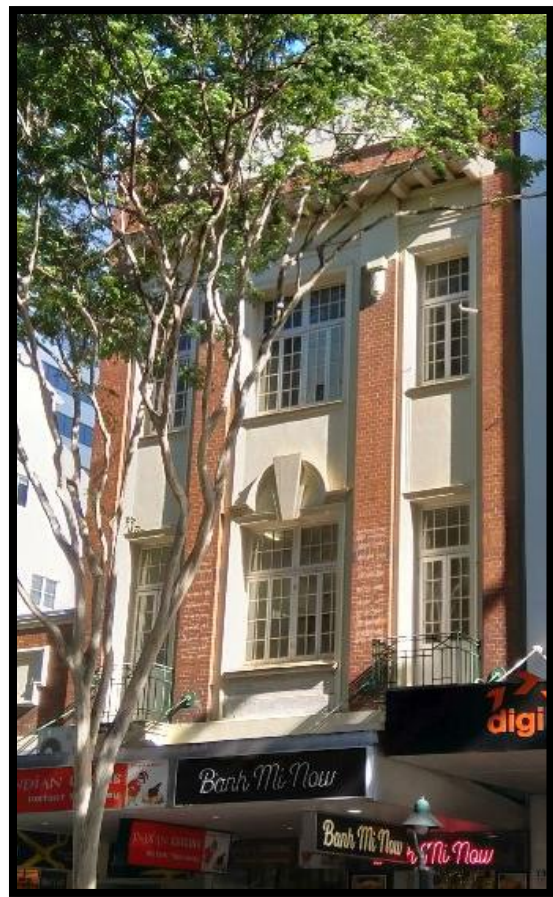
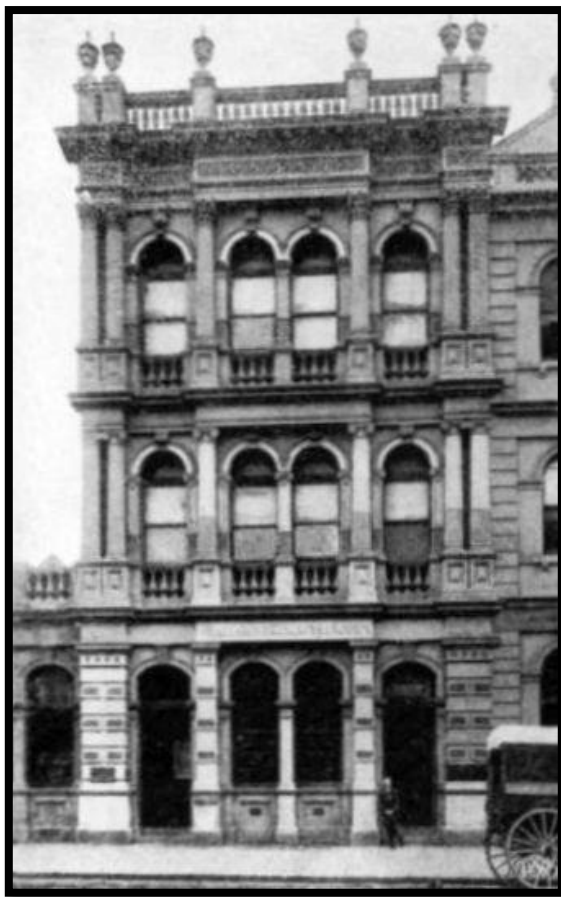
Looking south along Adelaide Street from Wharf Street, 1921



Looking south along Adelaide Street from Wharf Street, 1949

Architectural Overview

The architectural challenges in remodelling old buildings to conform to a truncated street-alignment are well illustrated in the case of Selbourne Chambers (B9). Here, a three-storey building erected in 1886-87 to a design of Richard Gailey senior had to be truncated, almost forty years later, by the architect's son, Richard Gailey junior. As the before-and-after photos of the façade show, the younger Gailey maintained the bay-structure of the façade, which probably expressed the structural members of the interior. Stylistically, the fussy "boom-style" façade was simplified to a modern, but certainly not avant-garde, composition, with some discreet reminders of the Edwardian Baroque, which are discernible in the red face-brick, the balconettes, and the very exaggerated keystone to the principal window.



Selbourne Chambers, about 1902 and 2019

The structural challenges in this sort of remodelling were considerable. As one contemporary observer remarked,

To the uninitiated, the problem of making buildings conform with a new alignment is comparatively easy, but it is not quite so easy to solve as would appear on the surface. For instance, many buildings might be substantial, and good for many years to come, but there are cases where they have been built at a time when steel girders were not so commonly used, and when concrete was not so popular as it is today. Furthermore, a purchaser has to decide

what style of building will give him a reasonable return for his investment, and then arises the question as to whether the foundations will carry the new structure.⁸

The procedure adopted when dealing with the former Dunlop Rubber building (D4), a solidly constructed edifice dating back to 1904 (and extended in 1910), was described as follows:

This ... building is receiving scientific treatment. The existing [side and rear] walls are being retained, the unrequired portion [the façade] having been literally disconnected preparatory to demolition.⁹

In the case of the former Henry Berry building (D10), a local newspaper commented that "Messrs Berry's building is a picturesque one, and it is hoped that the [remodelled] frontage will also be of ornate design."¹⁰ Of course the idea that an existing façade might possess heritage value, and thus be worthy of preservation, would have seemed bizarre in Brisbane in the 1920s. In any case, the cost of preserving and moving an existing façade would have been prohibitive.



Adelaide Street, 1942, looking north from Albert Street

There was one feature of the remodelled streetscape on the western side of Adelaide Street which was often commented upon, and that was the ubiquitous cantilevered awning. In 1923 the City Architect had decreed that "all awnings in the principal streets of the city shall be constructed on the cantilever system."¹¹ Thereafter the old veranda posts gradually began to disappear, producing much less cluttered pavements, and offering a better view of the

⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 30 October 1928, p.7.

⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 7 May 1929, p.10.

¹⁰ *Telegraph* (Brisbane), 25 September 1929, second edition, p.2.

¹¹ *Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland*, 7 June 1923, supplement, p.I.

ground-floor façades of the buildings. A 1942 photo of Adelaide Street illustrates the difference which this produced in the appearance of the western and eastern sides of the street.

At a meeting of the Town Planning Association of Queensland in December 1927, local architect Charles B. Da Costa complained that

A large sum of money had been expended on the widening of Adelaide Street between Albert and Edward Streets, yet, owing to the absence of any control on design, the buildings erected on that section could only be described as a jumble of designs, several of which were quite unsuited for such an important thoroughfare.¹²

The issue of aesthetic control of building-design was one which often exercised Australian architects and town planners, but such a concept was fundamentally at odds with the *laissez-faire* ethos so prevalent in Australia. Certainly, as the individual analysis of the buildings in Section B will demonstrate, some of the buildings erected or remodelled were very modest structures for one of the main streets of a capital city. Of course the onset of a worldwide economic depression late in 1929 did not help matters, but most of the building work was complete by then.

As to the architectural styles adopted, it will be seen that they were quite conservative, as one would expect in Brisbane at the time. However Brisbane architects were not unaware of developments interstate and overseas. For example, one can perhaps detect some stylistic progress in the work of Richard Gailey junior, from the quite conservative design of the Globe Hotel (B3, built 1924-25) to the sleeker and simpler lines of the Hotel Daniell (A1, remodelled 1930). Of course the latter building may owe something to the input of Gailey's talented young assistant, Aaron Bolot.

The buildings examined here include an interesting subset of premises designed for the newly emerging automobile industry. This was a new type of building for Brisbane. No plans have been located for any of these buildings, but the brief descriptions published in the press indicate that they typically consisted of a showroom at ground level, with internal ramps leading to storage or servicing areas on other levels. A related phenomenon was the appearance at this time of the first multi-storey car parks in Brisbane.

Finally, it is also worth highlighting the fact that the widening of Adelaide Street also saw the development of what were virtually the first public open spaces in the centre of Brisbane. Apart from the square between William and George Streets, now known as Queen's Gardens, part of which was made available as a public park in 1904, King George Square (A6) and Anzac Square (C2) were the only public open spaces in the centre of the city, and they would remain so for many years to come.

¹² *Brisbane Courier*, 1 December 1927, p.17.

**SECTION B: BUILDINGS ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF ADELAIDE
STREET**

A1. HOTEL DANIELL

Address: 4-16 Adelaide Street (cnr George Street), Brisbane, Qld.

Built: 1930

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Richard Gailey junior

Builder: Stanley Samuel Carrick

Status: Demolished 1973

References:

BCC building register no.21240, 28/4/1930.

Brisbane Courier, 11 February 1930, p.3.

Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland, 10 March 1930, p.56.

Brisbane Courier, 12 August 1930, p.5.



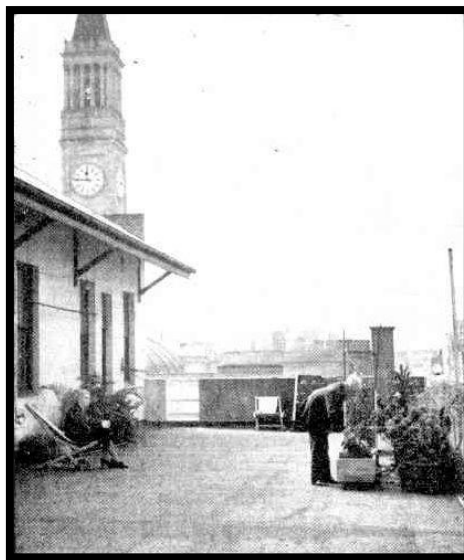
Perspective drawing of the original plan, 1930

On the prominent western corner of George and Adelaide Streets, opposite the Supreme Court building, the Imperial Hotel was erected in 1886-87. A brick building of four storeys, it was then the largest hotel in Brisbane, and it had been designed by George Clark, with input from his more famous brother, John James Clark, and also from Thomas Pye. It replaced the old Imperial Hotel, which had for some years been under the management of John Lennon, until Lennon erected a new hotel a little further along George Street, towards Ann Street (see

building A3). The first licensee of the new Imperial Hotel was Charles H. Daniell, and the hotel gradually became known by his name, to distinguish it from Lennon's establishment, for which Lennon had reused the name Imperial Hotel.

The City Council resumed the hotel in 1921, as part of the street-widening project, for the sum of £28,000. In 1925 the Council sold it (at a very large profit) to the proprietor of the adjoining Lennons Hotel for £50,000, on the condition that the 14-foot strip be removed from the Adelaide Street frontage. However there was no urgency for doing so, because this section of Adelaide Street could not be widened until the erection of the new City Hall was complete. The architects Atkinson, Powell and Conrad produced plans for a remodelled building, but the owner instead sold the building in April 1929 to a Victorian purchaser, who commissioned Richard Gailey junior to prepare new designs. Gailey was assisted by a young architect, Aaron Bolot, who soon afterwards moved to Sydney and established a significant career there. The building work took place during 1930.

The ground floor of the remodelled hotel accommodated the public and private bars, and the main entrances were finished in Queensland timbers. The retail potential of the Adelaide Street frontage was exploited by the insertion of two shop-fronts. The upper floors were devoted to the dining room, lounges, and bedrooms for guests, the bedrooms all having at least one external window, and many of them were equipped with a private bathroom and a telephone, both of which were a considerable luxury in Brisbane hotels at the time. On the upper floors, the service rooms were grouped around the lift-well. On top of the building was a roof garden, although not the large pergola which Gailey had proposed.



Roof garden, 1939

The external treatment was also somewhat simpler than in Gailey's original design, possibly as a result of the onset of the Great Depression. The brickwork was rendered, with string courses, a cornice, and rusticated quoins at the bevelled corner. A cantilevered awning extended along both street-frontages.

During the Second World War the building was remodelled as an officers' club. It was again a leading hotel after the war, but it was demolished in 1973 to make way for the City Council's large new Administration Centre and City Plaza.



About 1934

A2. NATIONAL BANK OF AUSTRALASIA

Address: 18-20 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1939-40

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Powell, Dods and Thorpe

Builder: Ralph George Heaven

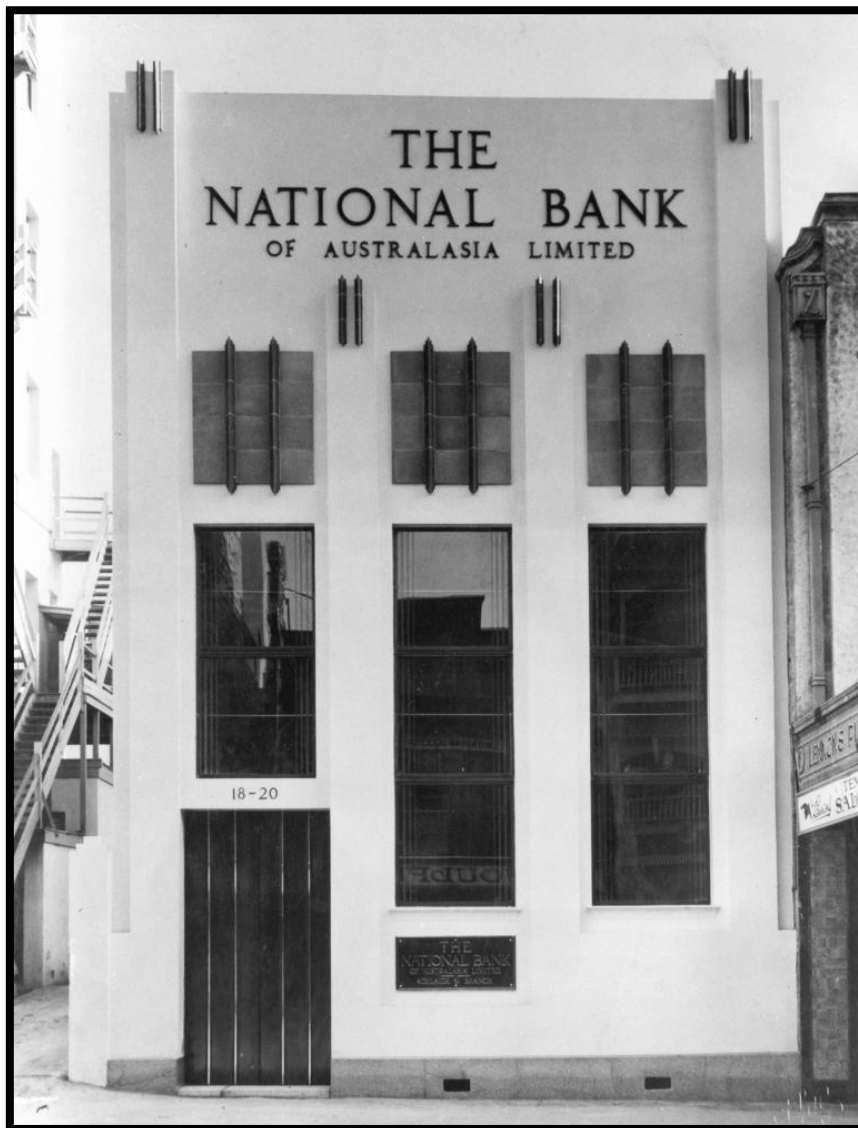
Status: Demolished 1973

References:

BCC building register no.42840, Dec. 1939 [index only, register lost].

Courier-Mail, 19 December 1939, p.6.

Courier-Mail, 21 May 1940, p.16.



About 1940

Note: This building, which was remodelled in 1939-40, lies outside the timeframe of the street-widening project described in this study. However it has been included so as to give a complete history of the buildings on the western side of Adelaide Street between the wars.

When the Imperial Hotel (A1) was erected in the 1880s, the main frontage of that building was to George Street, and at the rear was a large yard, which opened onto Adelaide Street. By the 1930s, street-frontages in Adelaide Street were too valuable to remain undeveloped, so after the remodelling of the Hotel Daniell, the yard at the rear was subdivided from the remainder of the property and sold.

It was initially purchased by the Brisbane Mirror Company, who in 1935-36 erected a two-storey building here, designed for them by Jack P. Donoghue. Some years later, this property was sold to the National Bank of Australasia, who intended to rebuild it as banking premises. They entrusted the project to the architects Powell, Dods and Thorpe, a firm which had taken over the business of Lange Powell, who had died prematurely in 1938, and who had served as the bank's architect since it had first established itself in Queensland in 1919.

Much of the earlier building was demolished to create a new structure with a lofty banking chamber at the front. At the rear, there was a mezzanine floor to accommodate staff rooms, a storeroom, and lavatories. Beneath the mezzanine, on the ground floor, were the manager's office and the strong room. The banking chamber featured recessed ceiling lamps, rubber flooring, and walls panelled to the height of the partitions, in walnut and maple.

Given the date of construction, it is not surprising to see the influence of the Art Deco style in the exterior treatment. Above the granite base-course, the brickwork was rendered in white, with pronounced vertical lines created by pilasters topped by fins. The tall, narrow, bronze windows of the banking chamber were surmounted by terra cotta panels, also with vertical fins. The entrance doors were of bronze, with vertical chromium strips on each leaf.

This attractive small building remained in use as a bank until shortly before it was demolished in 1973 to permit construction of the City Council's new Administration Centre.

A3. LENNONS HOTEL ANNEXE

Address: 22-26 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1930

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: Addison and Macdonald

Builder: Marberete Company

Status: Demolished 1973

References:

BCC building register no.21570, 29/7/1930.

Brisbane Courier, 17 June 1930, p.3.



About 1955

Lennons Hotel was a Brisbane institution. John Lennon had been licensee of the Imperial Hotel in George Street, opposite the Supreme Court building, since 1875. In 1883-84 he erected a new three-storey hotel beside it, to an Italianate design by F.D.G. Stanley. Lennon wished to reuse the name Imperial Hotel for his new premises, but the owners of the old building retained that name, and they granted the license for it to Herbert Gardner, who soon transferred the license to Charles Daniell. In 1886-87 Daniell erected a large new building on the corner of George and Adelaide Streets (A1), which then went by the name of Daniell's Imperial Hotel. John Lennon's premises were initially known as Lennon's Imperial Hotel, but his building gradually became known simply as Lennon's Hotel.

At the rear of the hotel there were a side entrance and yard which opened onto Adelaide Street. In 1923, when the City Council began resuming land for the widening of Adelaide Street, a shrewd businessman suggested that, if the Council would resume the whole of the Lennons property fronting Adelaide Street, he would pay them a very good price to purchase it after it had been truncated. The then owner of Lennons Hotel, Annie Cain, was so alarmed at this prospect that she gave the Council the 14-foot strip of land, without any compensation, on the condition that she could retain the rest of the property. Not surprisingly, there were many in the business world of Brisbane who felt that Mrs Cain had been very shabbily treated.

Having saved the land, Mrs Cain was apparently now keen to build upon it and make it profitable. She commissioned the partnership of George Frederick Addison (son of the illustrious G.H.M. Addison) and Herbert Stanley Macdonald to prepare plans for an annexe to the main hotel, with frontage to Adelaide Street. In 1928 they produced a design for a five-storey building, but following the onset of the Great Depression these plans were simplified to a two-storey structure, with a garage on the ground floor (to cater for the increasing number of car-owners) and a bar. On the upper floor there was a palm lounge with a grill room. Contemporary photos suggest that the external design of the upper floor was rather Mediterranean, with tall, round-arched openings, filled with large louvre windows.

This annexe was of course connected to the main building, and it was also intended to connect it with the upper floors of the remodelled Imperial Chambers building (A4), which were to be leased to Lennons, although this latter plan also fell victim to the severe economic downturn.

In 1938 the Sydney architect, Emil Sodersteen, produced plans for a major rebuilding of Lennons Hotel. The model which he prepared suggests that these plans included a large new building of about seven storeys on the Adelaide Street frontage.¹ This may have been only a suggestion for the longer term, and it was certainly the case that the building erected from 1940 to 1941, after the outbreak of the Second World War, was less ambitious than the original design. The annexe remained unchanged.

In 1954 Karl Langer prepared plans for an eight-storey reconstruction of the Adelaide Street annexe,² but this project was apparently abandoned in favour of a much larger extension along Ann Street, which Langer designed in 1956. The Adelaide Street annexe was not significantly altered before the whole Lennons complex was demolished in 1973 to make way for the new City Council Administration Centre.

¹ A photograph of the model was published in *Building* (Sydney), 24 October 1938, p.14.

² See the perspective drawing published in *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane), 1 August 1954, p.7.

A4. KELVIN HOUSE

Address: 28-34 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1929-30

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Office of the Brisbane City Architect (Alfred Herbert Foster)

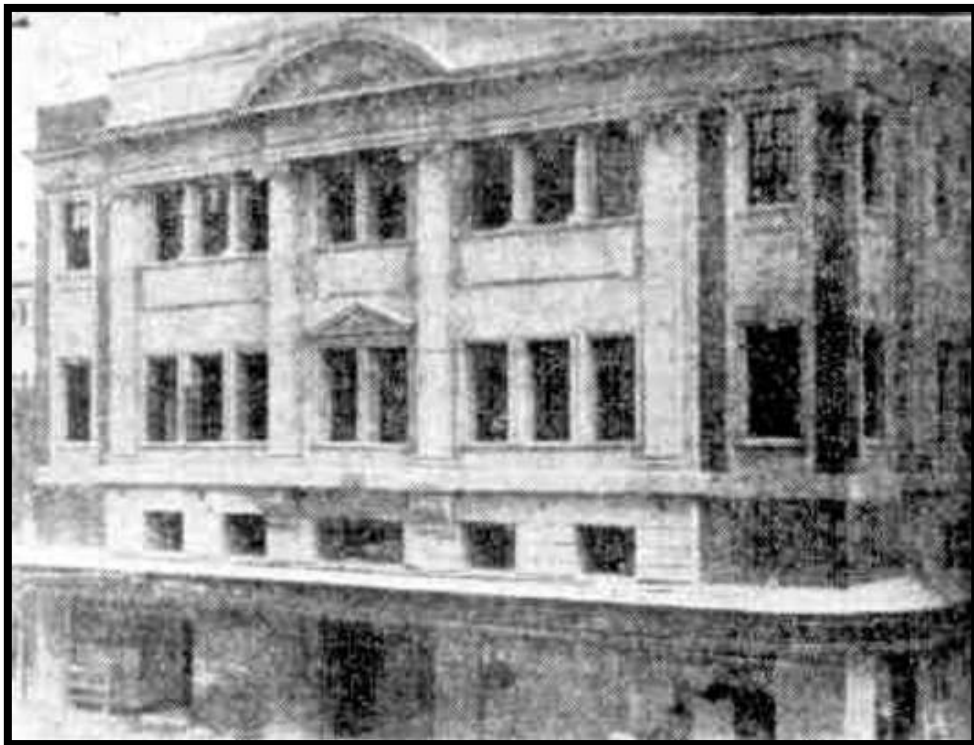
Builder: George Edward Day & Son

Status: Demolished 1973

References:

BCC building register no.20119, 22/10/1929.

Brisbane Courier, 30 July 1929, p.11.



1930

By the 1880s the southern end of Adelaide Street was becoming increasingly populated by the legal profession, because of the proximity of the Supreme Court. In 1887-88 the solicitors Chambers, Bruce and McNab erected here a brick building of three storeys (plus basement), designed for them by William Holloway Chambers. On the ground floor there were four shops, with a central entrance giving access to the offices on the two upper floors. Soon after completion, the building was named Imperial Chambers.

In 1922 Imperial Chambers was resumed for street-widening, and plans were already well in hand for the new City Hall, which would extend almost to the boundary of the Imperial Chambers property. The City Council planned to create a narrow roadway at the rear of the

City Hall and erect a new four-storey building in place of Imperial Chambers, and then lease shop and office space in this new building. There were those who thought that demolishing Imperial Chambers was wasteful and premature, especially as the Council would need extra office accommodation once the Greater Brisbane amalgamation had taken place and until the new City Hall was complete. In 1925 this issue became a matter of bitter dispute between the outgoing City Council and the incoming Greater Brisbane Council, and it had to be referred to the State Government for arbitration. The state authorities decided that Imperial Chambers should be retained as office space for the Council until completion of the City Hall.

By 1929, when the Council staff were beginning to occupy the new City Hall, the Council had decided that, rather than demolish Imperial Chambers, they would truncate it and give it a new façade to harmonise with the adjacent City Hall. The Council's Electricity Supply Department would occupy part of the remodelled building, and the remainder would be let. The City Architect was instructed to prepare plans, and the work was carried out during 1929 and 1930.

Although the aim was to erect a building which would not disgrace its illustrious neighbour, there were insufficient funds to produce anything approaching the magnificence of the City Hall. Instead of the fine freestone masonry of the latter, the façade of Imperial Chambers was executed in brick, and Renaissance details were applied in what appears to have been a cement render. Ionic pilasters and attached columns spanned the two upper floors, and the central bay was accentuated by a small pediment above the first-floor windows and a larger segmental pediment above the parapet. There was nothing Renaissance about the cantilevered awning.



1953

As the remodelling neared completion, it was decided to name the modified building Kelvin House. The adjacent Lennons Hotel proposed to the Council that the two upper floors of Kelvin House should be fitted out as additional bedroom accommodation for the hotel, to which they could be connected at the rear. Addison and Macdonald prepared plans for the layout of these floors,¹ featuring bedrooms with private bathrooms, including some larger bed-sitting rooms, and a central palm court as a guest lounge. The economic downturn brought these plans to naught, and the upper floors were instead leased as offices, which were mainly occupied by legal practitioners. On the ground floor were the appliance showrooms for the Council's Electricity Department and Barker's Book Store.

Like all the other properties between the City Hall and George Street, Kelvin House was demolished in 1973 to make way for the large new City Council Administration Centre and City Plaza.

¹ Published in *Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland*, 10 December 1929, p.28 and 36.

A5. BRISBANE CITY HALL

Address: 36-84 Adelaide Street (cnr Albert Square), Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1924-30

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: Hall and Prentice

Builder: Douglas Dunn Carrick

Status: Standing

References:

Building (Sydney), 12 November 1921, p.64-84.

Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland, 10 April 1930, p.28-45.

Building (Sydney), 12 May 1930, p.48-64.

Denver Beanland, *Brisbane, Australia's New World City: A History of the Old Town Hall, City Hall and Brisbane City Council, 1985-2013* (Salisbury, Qld.:

Boolarong Press, 2016), chapters 2-5.

Brisbane City Hall floor plans, 1924-41, Brisbane City Archives, BCA0312.



Perspective drawing of the original design, 1921

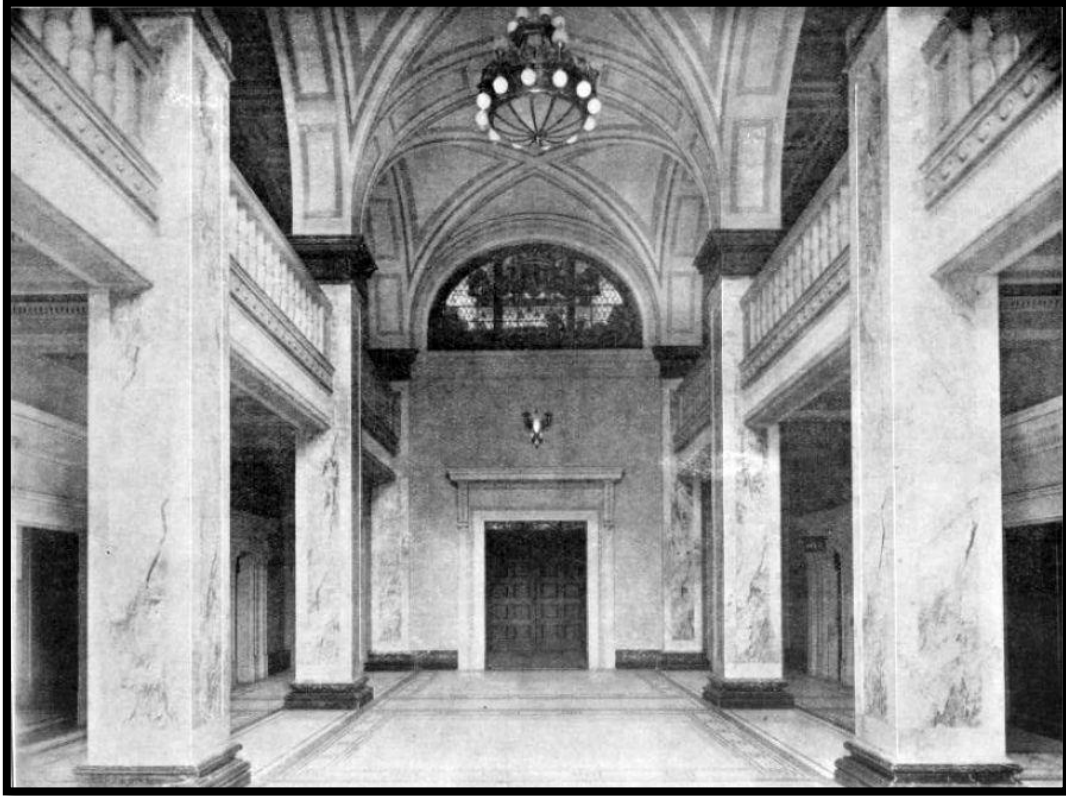
When the original plans for Brisbane were drawn up, no provisions were made for any large public buildings, because Governor Gipps did not believe that they would ever be required. Thus when the first town hall was erected in 1864-66, it was inserted into the street-front on the western side of Queen Street, just north of George Street, adjacent to the old convict barracks. The design, by William Coote, was controversial and the building was suspected of being structurally unsound, but it proved to be remarkably durable. The last vestiges of it were not demolished until the new Lennons Hotel was being erected on that site in the early 1970s.

In 1883 the City Council decided to erect a new town hall on a site fronting Adelaide, Albert and Ann Streets, which had originally been designated as a water reserve. The ground here was swampy and thus not ideal for construction of a large building, and the siting of the new town hall would be for many years a topic of much debate. Nonetheless a competition was held for the design, and in January 1884 the first prize was awarded to the Sydney architects, John James Clark and his brother George. The project lapsed, but in 1908 the Council asked Leslie Corrie (who had recently served as mayor of Brisbane) to develop new plans, based on the original Clark Brothers scheme, and to do so in conjunction with the architectural partnership of Henry Wallace Atkinson and Charles McLay. These plans were accepted by the Council in 1909, but rejected by the ratepayers two years later.

When it subsequently became clear that the Brisbane Council would soon be merged with surrounding local authorities to form a Greater Brisbane City Council, it was obvious that a larger building than anything previously projected would be required for the new city hall, and early in 1919 the Council finally decided to press ahead with the project. Instead of calling for competitive designs, a special committee of Council investigated the matter, and settled upon the local partnership of Thomas Ramsay Hall and George Gray Prentice, who in July 1919 were appointed architects for the new building. They were instructed to take into consideration the proposed widening of Adelaide Street, and they duly presented several alternative sketch plans. In November 1919 the Council accepted a design in a "Renaissance style." Today, architectural historians consider it to be a fine example of the Inter-War Academic Classical style.

Because the original Town Hall Reserve was intended for a somewhat smaller building, it was necessary to resume some properties south of the reserve to accommodate the more ambitious structure which was now envisaged. In Adelaide Street, this resulted in the demolition of two fine buildings. Immediately south of the reserve, at 40-44 Adelaide Street, the Johnsonian Club had been built in 1898 to a design of G.H.M. Addison, and it had been extended in 1900 by Addison and his then partner, Leslie Corrie. Between the Johnsonian Club and Imperial Chambers (A4) stood the City Mutual Life Assurance building, at 36-38 Adelaide Street; it had been significantly extended by Atkinson and Corrie in 1900. In addition to these two buildings, there were various structures of a more temporary nature on the reserve itself (livery stables, a motor-car sales yard, etc.) which were also demolished before work could begin to excavate the foundations.

Construction of the superstructure commenced early in 1924, and by 1928 it was largely complete. The final task was the sculpting of the large tympanum over the entrance. This was designed and executed by the Brisbane sculptor, Daphne Mayo, and it is an allegoric composition representing the State and her citizens.



Adelaide Street vestibule, 1930

The lunette above the doorway contains stained glass designed by Brisbane artist William Bustard

The building was constructed on a steel frame, with a base-course of granite and walls of Helidon freestone. The main frontage faced Albert Square (later renamed King George Square) and is based around a portico of Corinthian columns, surmounted by a pediment and flanked by Ionic colonnades. The side elevations to Adelaide and Ann Streets are somewhat simpler, with pilasters replacing the columns. The clock-tower above the entrance was originally 320 feet (98 metres) above pavement-level, and would for many decades remain the tallest structure in Brisbane.

There is a bronze cantilevered awning over the bronze doorways of the main entrance, but the proposed awning over the Adelaide Street entrance was abandoned, as it was thought that it "spoiled the effect of the building."¹ By early 1930 the Adelaide Street frontage had been landscaped with a wide footpath and garden beds.

¹ *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane), 9 June 1929, p.2.

Internally, the building is based around a large circular concert hall, which is topped by a copper dome 125 feet (38 metres) in diameter. This circular auditorium is set within a square, which contained the Council offices, and the spandrels between the two serve as lightwells. There are many fine internal spaces, the most impressive being the entrance foyer, with a vaulted plaster ceiling and a large marble staircase.

By the 1960s the City Council had outgrown the City Hall, and it had begun erecting offices on the roof and in the basement. In the early 1970s all the land to the south of the City Hall, as far as George Street, was resumed for the erection of a new multi-storey Brisbane Administration Centre, with a shopping plaza below street level, and these were opened in 1975. The Council eventually outgrew these premises too, and in 2006 moved to a new 38-storey building, Brisbane Square, which occupies the block bounded by Queen, George and Adelaide Streets and North Quay.

With the old City Hall no longer required for office purposes, it was possible to undertake a major and very costly restoration of the building in the years from 2010 to 2013. This was funded, in part, by voluntary donations from Brisbane ratepayers.



About 1935

Showing the frontages to Adelaide Street (left) and Albert Square

A6. ALBERT SQUARE (later KING GEORGE SQUARE)



About 1942

The original layout of Brisbane's streets did not make any provision for public squares or parks. To be sure, there was a site for a "proposed square" in the old Government Garden, east of Alice Street, but that was well away from the centre of the town. Governor Gipps was apparently of the opinion that public open spaces would only encourage riotous assembly.

As the town grew, the civic authorities struggled to meet the need for public open spaces. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, when the Town Hall Reserve was established on the south side of Albert Street, between Adelaide and Ann Streets, Albert Street was widened at this point to create a public square. In the 1880s new produce markets were opened nearby at Roma Street, and the square became popularly known as the Market Square. In the 1890s it was officially named Albert Square, but the name Market Square remained in common use for some years to come.

Photos from the early years of the twentieth century show this square as an unembellished dusty open space, bounded on the southern side by hoardings around the Town Hall Reserve. However on its northern side, substantial buildings were appearing, such as Kent's Buildings (B1), the Albert Hotel, and the Tivoli Theatre (opened in 1915).

With the completion of the new City Hall in 1930, it was clearly necessary to improve Albert Square to provide a proper setting for the grand new civic edifice. As the Sydney magazine *Building* remarked in its description of the new City Hall,

We have only one regret concerning this magnificent structure, and that is in regard to its position. How much more inspiring would it have looked if it had been possible to visualise its perspective from afar! As it now stands, it is hemmed in by other buildings.¹

Initial efforts were devoted to building retaining walls and a broad flight of granite steps in front of the main entrance to the City Hall, and also to planting palm trees and laying out garden beds. However the death of King George V in 1936 gave birth to the idea of developing the square as a memorial to the late monarch. A competition was held for the design of a memorial statue, and this was won by Reginald Summerhayes, a Perth architect.² The statue was cast in bronze in London and finally erected in May 1938, at which point the square was renamed King George Square.

The design of the memorial was the subject of some controversy. Brisbane architect Lange Powell declared that "the whole thing is rather ghastly," and local artist William Bustard declared that the lions flanking the equestrian statue of King George looked "more like puppies."³ The City Architect was responsible for the further beautification of the square, with pools of pink granite sited on either side of the statue's Helidon freestone plinth, and low retaining walls erected in the local porphyry.⁴ The discreet, below-ground toilet facilities were an indication that Brisbane was finally developing some urban sophistication. There was debate for some years as to whether or not fountains should be installed, and these finally came into operation in 1949.

In 1963 the ambitious and visionary Lord Mayor, Clem Jones, persuaded the City Council to undertake a major expansion and redesign of King George Square. This large project involved the demolition of buildings on the north side of the square to increase its area, and a huge excavation to create a multi-storey underground carpark. When this project was finally complete in 1975, the Square had been closed to traffic and the surface-level raised. On the one hand, this permitted a better view of the impressive frontage of the City Hall, but on the other hand, it reduced the apparent height of the building and so robbed it of some of its visual impact.

In 2008-9 the square was again completely rebuilt when the carpark was reconfigured and reduced in size to make way for a large new underground bus station.

¹ *Building* (Sydney), 12 May 1930, p.53.

² *Building* (Sydney), 12 November 1936, p.29.

³ *Courier-Mail*, 10 May 1938, p.1.

⁴ *Building* (Sydney), 25 May 1942, p.10-11.

B1. HIBERNIAN BUILDINGS

Address: 86-96 Adelaide Street (cnr Albert Square), Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1925-26

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: George Gerald Hutton

Builder: Frank French

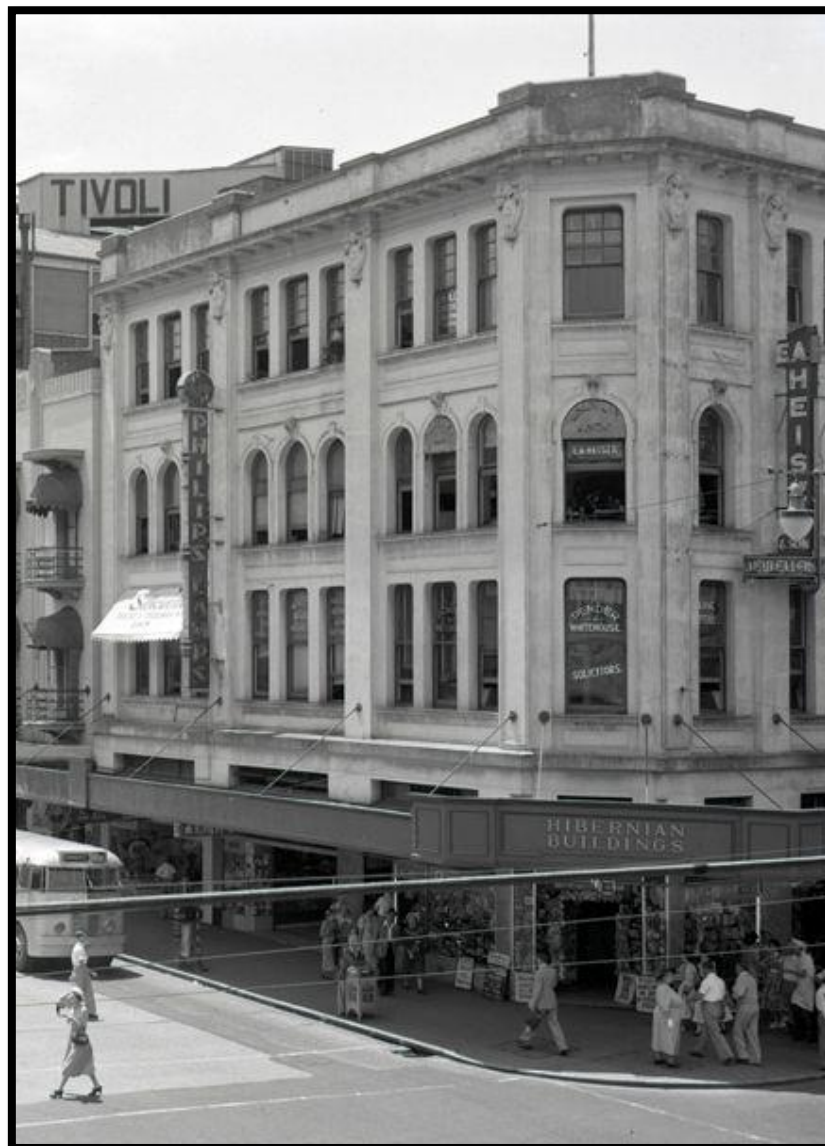
Status: Demolished 1965

References:

BCC building register no.5465, 26/3/1925.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 20 April 1925, p.6.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 13 April 1926, p.16.



King George Square frontage, 1953

In 1886-87 the prominent Brisbane horse-breeder and racing identity, William H. Kent, had a four-storey shop and office building erected on the corner of Albert and Adelaide Streets. It was designed for him by Richard Gailey senior, and was thereafter known as Kent's Buildings. In 1924 the City Council resumed this building, truncated the allotment, and resold the building, under the condition that it be rebuilt to the new street-alignment, to the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, an insurance company widely patronised by those of Irish origin.

The Society called for competitive designs for remodelling of the building, and selected the design submitted by the Brisbane architect George Gerald Hutton. Early in 1925 work began to remodel the brick façade on both street frontages, modernise the interior, and insert new shop-fronts at ground level. The original Italianate façade was simplified in a Free Classical style, with some modest Baroque flourishes beneath the prominent dentilled cornice. The corner of the building was bevelled, and an unusually long cantilevered awning was applied to both frontages. This awning spanned a width of 14 feet (more than four metres) above the Adelaide Street pavement. A local newspaper reported that, "The building itself, with its yellow appearance, is striking."¹



Aerial view, 1964

¹¹ *Telegraph* (Brisbane), 13 May 1926, p.4.

The shops on this busy corner were not difficult to let, and the office space above was also in demand, especially from the legal profession. The building was demolished in 1965 to permit the expansion of King George Square.



Demolition, 1965

B2. CENTENNIAL HALL

Address: 98-104 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1924-25

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Lange Leopold Powell

Builder: Alex Anderson

Status: Demolished about 1964

References:

BCC building register no.5313, 29/8/1924.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 2 September 1924, p.14.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 20 April 1925, p.6.

Brisbane Courier, 2 September 1930, p.8.

Judith Nissen, *Pedestrian Passages and Consumer Dreamworlds: Shopping Arcades of Central Brisbane* (St Lucia, Qld: Applied History Centre, University of Queensland, 2004), p.57-8.



1955



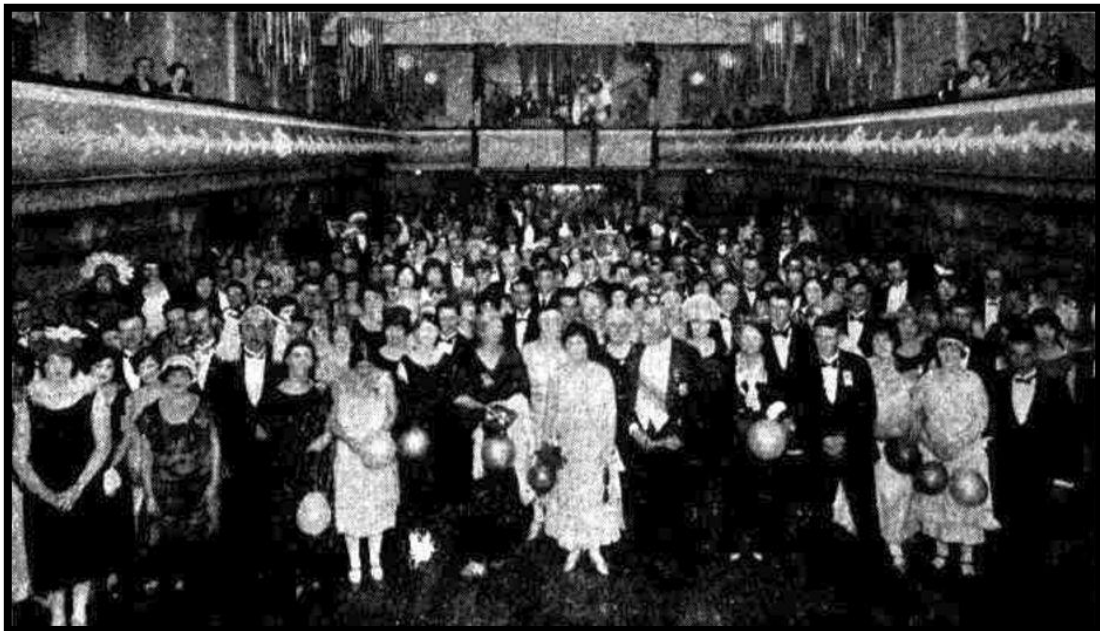
1964

The Centennial Hall, "a new place of public amusement,"¹ was opened in May 1888. It was designed by Victor Carandini, a Victorian-born architect of Italian and English parentage, in the form of a large auditorium with an upper gallery. A skating rink was soon incorporated into the structure, and a sliding roof enhanced the ventilation in hot weather.

About 1923 the City Council resumed this property, and in February 1924 they sold it to Uhl Brothers, who agreed to set the building back to the new street-alignment at their own expense. The new owners commissioned Lange Powell to prepare designs for a larger building, incorporating shops and offices for letting.

Powell designed a three-storey structure, with a small arcade of shops on the ground floor. The hall and its two galleries occupied the front of the two upper floors, the remainder of those floors being fitted out as offices. The shop-fronts were designed in the latest style, with glazed tiles, and they were sheltered by a cantilevered awning. The front elevation of the upper floors betrays Powell's lifelong affection for the Baroque. It was executed in face-brick, with rusticated pilasters, oeil de boeuf windows, round-headed windows with exaggerated keystones and balconettes, and a dentilled cornice.

In 1930 Centennial Hall was purchased by the Christian Scientists and the hall was converted into a place of worship, although the ground floor continued to be let for commercial purposes. About 1964 the building was demolished to make way for large new premises for the Reserve Bank of Australia.



Interior, 1925

¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 15 May 1888, p.5.

B3. GLOBE HOTEL

Address: 106-114 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1924-25

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: Richard Gailey junior

Builder: John Hutchinson

Status: Demolished about 1967

References:

BCC building register no.5320, 6/10/1924.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 20 April 1925, p.6.

Daily Standard (Brisbane), 1 June 1925, p.6.



1937

Tattersalls Hotel was established on this site in 1870. In 1892 it was renovated and reopened as the Globe Hotel. About 1923 the City Council resumed the building, and in February 1924 it was sold on the condition that it be set back on the new alignment.

The owners, Perkins & Co., decided against attempting to remodel the old building. Instead they commissioned the architect Richard Gailey junior to prepare plans for a new building. Gailey's initial design was for a seven-storey building in the Commercial Palazzo style,¹ but the owners eventually decided upon a more affordable structure of three storeys.

The design may well have been influenced by Lange Powell's adjacent Centennial Hall (B2), and shows similar Baroque features. The front elevation of the upper floors was executed in face-brick, with pilasters whose every sixth course was dressed in cement. The end bays were particularly decorative, with festoons in the spandrels between the second and third levels. The rectangular casement windows were embellished with exaggerated keystones or aprons.

In 1937, Addison and Macdonald (who were by then the leading hotel designers in Brisbane) undertook renovations, which seem to have mainly affected the ground floor.² The Globe Hotel was demolished about 1967 to make way for the large new Reserve Bank of Australia building.



Demolition in progress, about 1967

¹ *Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland*, 8 December 1924, p.34.

² *Truth* (Brisbane), 7 November 1937, p.36.

B4. MORRIS HOUSE

Address: 116-124 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1925

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Hall and Prentice (?)

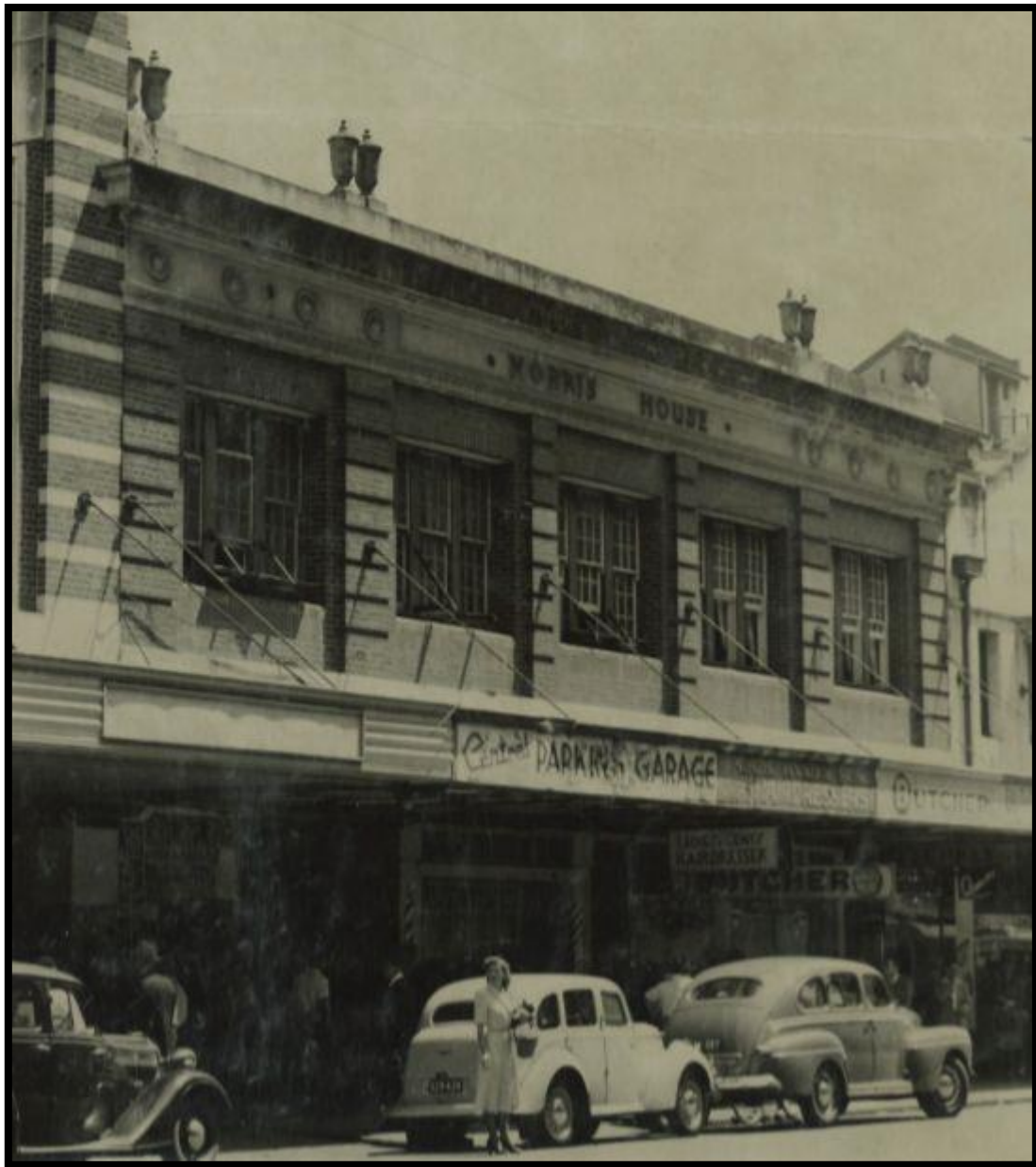
Builder: William Cunningham

Status: Demolished about 1990

References:

BCC building register no.5515, 19/5/1925.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 20 April 1925, p.6.



1948

Podmore and Hall were a firm of hardware merchants who had originally established their business in suburban Paddington in 1887. They subsequently moved into the city, first to premises in Elizabeth Street, and then in 1899 to a building at 116-124 Adelaide Street, which they subsequently purchased and remodelled. In 1924 the City Council resumed this building, truncated the allotment, and in 1925 resold it to George Willoughby Whatmore, on the condition that he have the building remodelled to the new alignment.

The Council's building register does not record the architect responsible for this project, but there is little doubt that it was designed by Prentice and Hall, the architects of the new City Hall. Prentice and Hall, in conjunction with the builder William Cunningham, were carrying out other projects for Whatmore at this time, such as Austin House (D2).

The design of the façade was in a Free Classical style, and it was very sympathetic to the neighbouring Globe Hotel (B3) and Centennial Hall (B2). The upper floor was in face-brick, with rusticated pilasters supporting an entablature embellished with paterae. The cornice above that was decorated by four pairs of urns. A cantilevered awning sheltered the shop-fronts at pavement level.

The ground floor was subsequently occupied by a parking garage, with shops and a café at the front. There were offices on the first floor. During the Second World War, the vacant area at the rear of the building became the site of the largest air-raid shelter in Brisbane.

In 1948 Morris House was purchased by the City Electric Light Company. In 1951 the company commissioned the architect Herbert Stanley Macdonald to remodel the building, and it then became known as Cochran House. It was demolished around 1990 to make way for a new 16-storey office block.

B5. EWING HOUSE

Address: 126-132 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1924-25

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Hall and Devereux

Builder: Thomas Keenan

Status: Standing (significantly altered)

References:

BCC building register no.5356, 14/12/1924.

Judith Nissen, *Pedestrian Passages and Consumer Dreamworlds: Shopping Arcades of Central Brisbane* (St Lucia, Qld: Applied History Centre, University of Queensland, 2004), p.69.



1955

The block of shops at 126-132 Adelaide Street, owned by the Banks Estate, escaped resumption by the City Council. Instead, the Council agreed that the owners could receive compensation for the truncation of their allotment, retain ownership of the remaining land, and arrange for the remodelling of the building.

The owners commissioned the architects Francis Richard Hall and Walter Alan Devereux to remodel the building. Unfortunately it has not proved possible to find any satisfactory image or description of this building. The remodelled structure was named Ewing House.

In 1960-61 this building was significantly remodelled to become the Mayfair Arcade, with shops laid out on the ground floor along a horseshoe-shaped passageway. The architects for the project were Scorer and Scorer.



Under construction, 1925

B6. BRYCE'S CHAMBERS

Address: 134-138 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1924

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: Hall and Prentice

Builder: George Albert Baumber

Status: Standing (significantly altered)

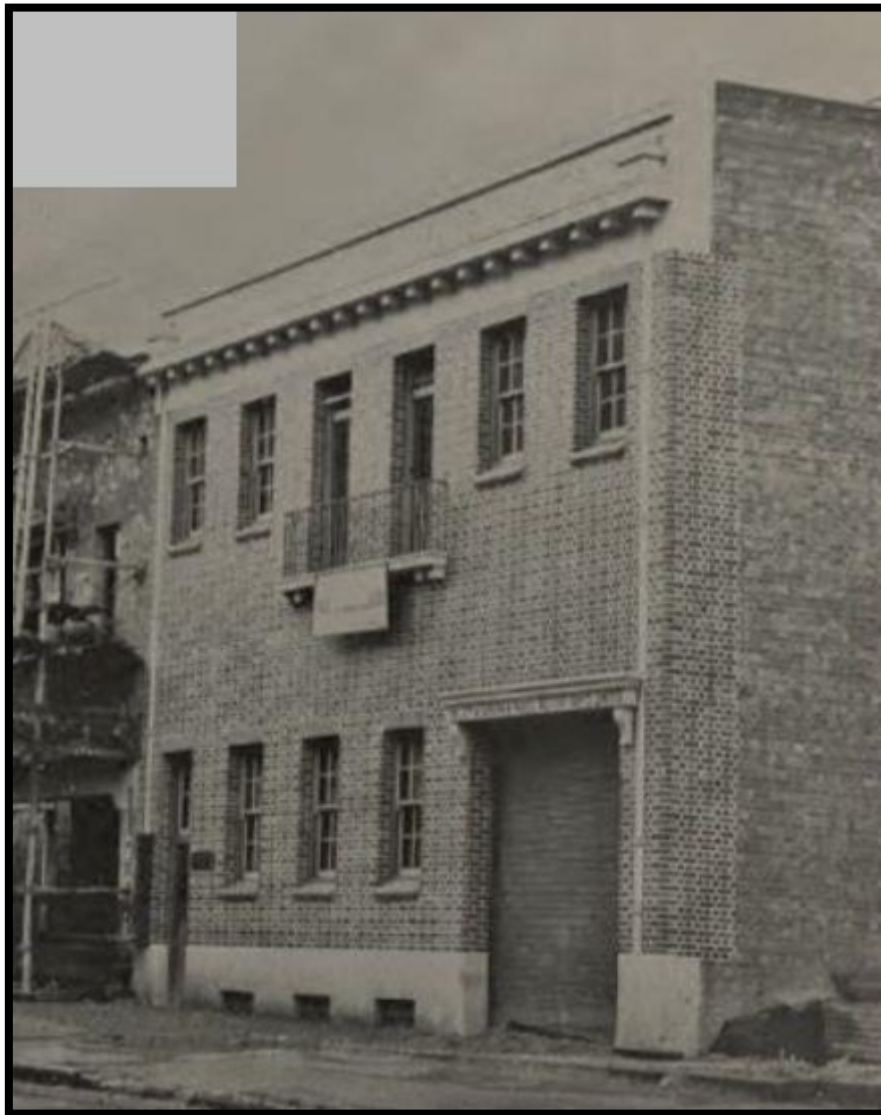
References:

BCC building register no.5137, 29/4/1924.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 30 June 1924, p.6.

Telegraph (Brisbane), 19 July 1924, second edition, p.6.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 29 July 1924, p.14.



1925

Thomas Bryce had established the City and Suburban Parcels Delivery Company in 1886, initially in premises in Edward Street, but late in 1889 new premises were acquired in Adelaide Street. When the City Council began resuming properties here in 1923, the company negotiated an agreement which allowed them to retain their allotment, receive compensation for its truncation, and rebuild their premises to the new alignment.

Aerial photos suggest that these premises were originally three separate buildings, erected one behind the other, so the nature of the remodelling conducted in 1924 is unclear. It possibly involved the erection of a new building at the front, and a further building (or extension) at the rear. The architects were Hall and Prentice, who had designed the new City Hall.

The building was of two storeys, with a basement, with a façade in patterned face-brick. The ground floor, with its goods entrance, was apparently for the use of the company, but there was also a doorway giving access to the new offices on the upper floor, which were named Bryce's Chambers, after the founder of the company. The balconette and dentilled cornice on the upper floor were modest attempts at adornment. Initially the building was erected without an awning, but this was added later.

There were further renovations during the 1930s, and after the Second World War this building became a branch of the Bank of Australasia. In 1951 that firm was incorporated into the ANZ Bank, who in 1960-61 remodelled these premises and added another storey.

B7. BLOCKSIDGE & FERGUSON

Address: 140-146 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1927-28

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: Clifford Ernest Plant

Builder: Charles Thomas Hall and Son

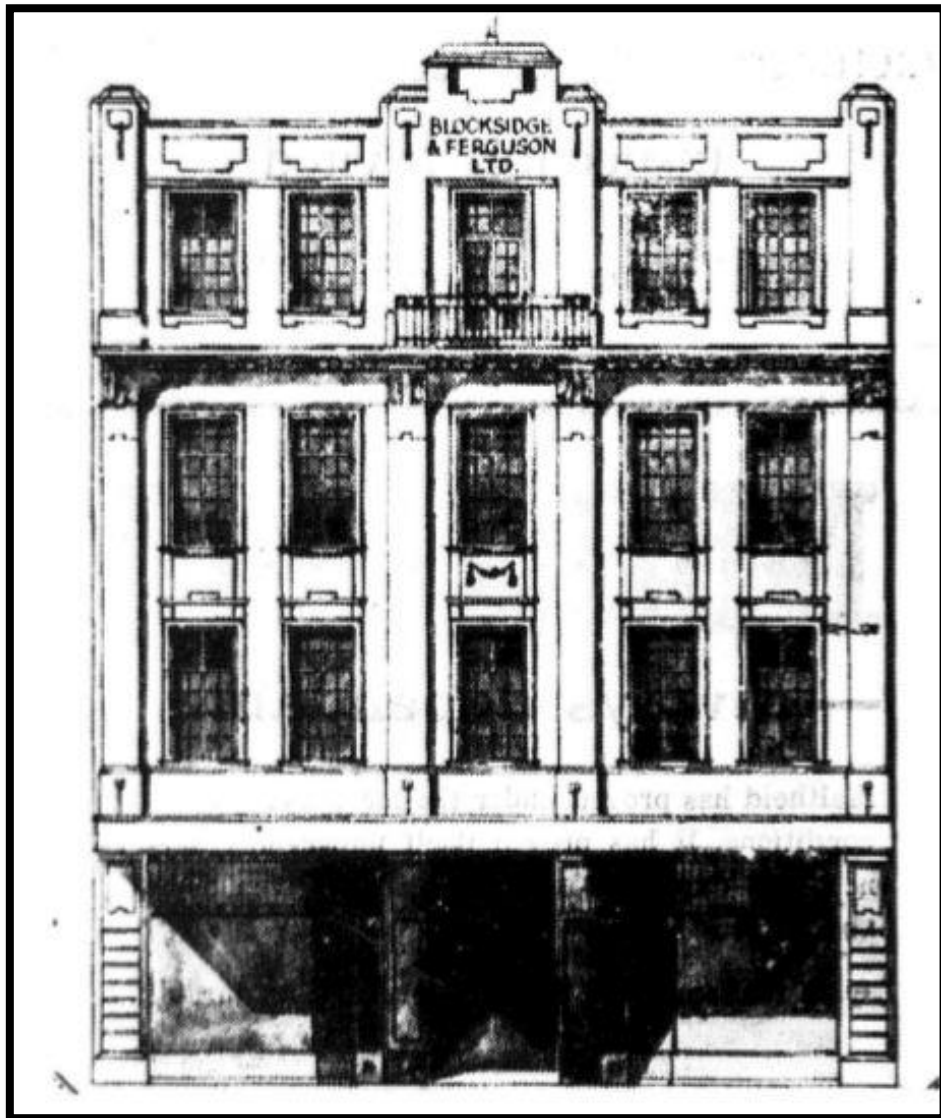
Status: Standing

References:

BCC building register no.12758, 1/6/1927.

Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland, 10 January 1927, p.66.

Telegraph (Brisbane), 31 July 1928, p.5.



Front elevation of original plan

It is difficult to believe that there were still completely undeveloped building allotments in Adelaide Street in the 1920s, but this was one such case. It was thus clearly advantageous that the City Council was able to resume it for street-widening, and then resell it to a vendor willing to develop the site. The new owners were Blocksidge and Ferguson, a successful local firm of real estate agents which had been founded in 1907. Experts in the local property market, they commissioned Clifford Plant to design a new four-storey building (plus basement) which would provide shop-fronts at street-level, with the company's offices and auction room at the rear of the ground floor, and office suites for letting on the upper floors.

Plant's design for the façade was an economical Renaissance composition, in a style which we would probably now call Free Classical. The façade was articulated by pilasters, with a prominent dentilled cornice below the topmost level, which in turn rose to a stepped parapet. There was very little other decoration: even the balconette originally planned for the top floor was not built. A cantilevered awning sheltered the ground floor. Construction was of reinforced concrete, and an electric lift was installed. A little of the original interior joinery in silky oak survives.



In 1962 a fifth storey was added, in an uncompromisingly modern idiom, to a design by Karl Langer.



About 1930

B8. BIRMINGHAM HOUSE

Address: 148-150 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1924

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Atkinson and Conrad

Builder: James Maskrey

Status: Standing (significantly altered)

References:

BCC building register no.5236, 17/6/1924.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 29 July 1924, p.14.



About 1930

The plumbers and hardware merchants, Podmore and Hall, had long been established in a building at 116-124 Adelaide Street (B4), which they had named Birmingham House. When it was resumed for street-widening in 1923, they were able to purchase the former premises of Mactaggart Brothers, stock and station agents, at 148-150 Adelaide Street, which had also been resumed and truncated. They then commissioned the architects Atkinson and Conrad to alter and extend this building to create a two-storey brick structure, with their shop at the ground level and a separate entry for the offices on the upper floor. The new building would,

like its predecessor, be called Birmingham House. The design of the façade was a very simple one.

In 1939 the Bank of New South Wales acquired this building and remodelled the ground floor as a bank, retaining the office space for letting on the upper floor.

B9. SELBOURNE CHAMBERS

Address: 152-164 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1924

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Richard Gailey junior

Builder: George Henry Heaven

Status: Standing

References:

BCC building register no.5254, 16/7/1924.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 9 September 1924, p.14.

Daily Standard (Brisbane), 4 February 1925, p.7.



2019

Selbourne Chambers was a three-storey, boom-style, Italianate office building erected in 1886-87 for the solicitors Wilson, Wilson and Brown, and designed by Richard Gailey senior. In 1924 it was still in the possession of the estate of Walter Horatio Wilson, and the trustees negotiated with the City Council so that they could retain the allotment after truncation and undertake the setting-back of the old building to the new alignment.

To supervise this project they called upon Richard Gailey junior, the son of the original architect. The building was actually in three sections, with two one-storey units to the south of the main three-storey block. Gailey retained the existing three-bay division of the façade to the main block, using face-brick pilasters to articulate the bays. The window-surrounds and spandrels were rendered. At the second level, the central window has an exaggerated keystone and the flanking windows have balconettes. At the top, a wide, bracketed cornice is surmounted by a parapet. The two one-storey units have similar parapets. A cantilevered awning spans the whole frontage, and the shop-fronts were originally tiled. As with Gailey's Globe Hotel (B3), there is something reminiscent of the Baroque Revival in this building.

B10. BOWMAN HOUSE

Address: 166-180 Adelaide Street (cnr Edward Street), Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1924-25

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: Hennessy and Hennessy, with Francis Richard Hall

Builder: George Henry Turner

Status: Standing (significantly altered)

References:

BCC building register no.5056, 16/1/1924.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 11 November 1924, p.14.

Daily Standard (Brisbane), 4 February 1925, p.7.



1954

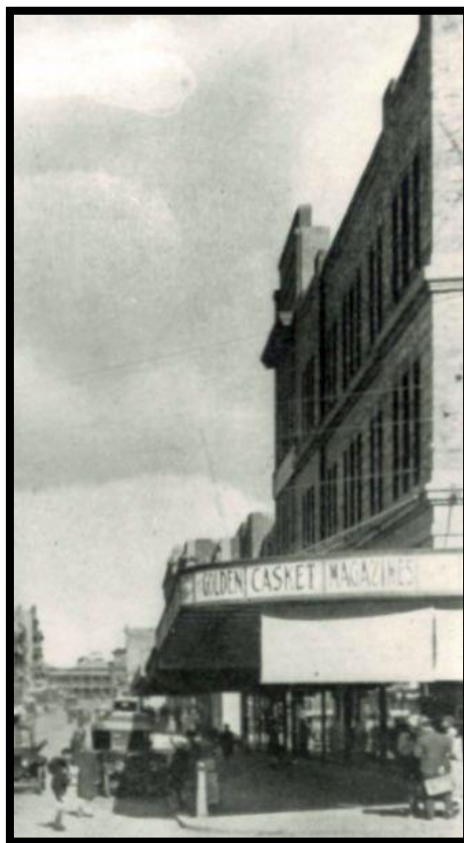
In 1873-74 a two-storey brick building was erected on the south-western corner of Adelaide and Edward Streets as a printing office, with a residence on the upper floor. It was designed by James Cowlshaw for the plumber, Hiram Wakefield, whose workshops and offices were in an adjoining one-storey building, also designed by Cowlshaw, and in a similar style. These buildings were later extended into a solid, three-storey structure, known as Wakefield's Buildings, which in 1879 was acquired by the State Government to become the headquarters of the Department of Public Instruction, until that agency eventually found permanent quarters in the newly expanded Treasury Building in 1893.

In 1917 Wakefield's Buildings were purchased as headquarters of the *Daily Standard*, a newspaper which was the organ of Queensland's powerful labour movement. The building was renamed Bowman House, after a recently deceased Labor Party politician.

In 1923 the City Council agreed to pay compensation for the truncation of the allotment, allowing the *Daily Standard* to retain ownership of the reduced property, with the condition that the building would be set-back. The owners consulted the Sydney architects, Hennessy and Hennessy, and the principal of that firm, Jack Hennessy junior, provided them with sketch plans for one of his typically ambitious schemes, in this case a nine-storey office block in a Commercial Palazzo style.¹ Wiser counsels prevailed, and the owners settled for a three-storey building, with foundations strong enough to support later extensions.

The design was a fairly plain one in face-brick, with quite narrow windows (probably in the hope of reducing sun-penetration). String courses articulated the storeys, and the parapet was unobtrusive. The shops at ground level were surmounted by a cantilevered awning. Hennessy and Hennessy were yet to open an office for their expanding practice in Brisbane, and they relied upon the venerable local architect, Francis Richard Hall, to supervise the project.

In 1957-58 the building was completely remodelled, to provide much larger windows and two additional floors.



Adelaide Street frontage, 1929

¹ *Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland*, 8 December 1924, p.60.

C1. STATE GOVERNMENT OFFICES (Units 1-3)

Address: 182-216 Adelaide Street (cnr Edward Street), Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1931-36

Nature of Project: New buildings

Architect: John Smith Murdoch (concept); developed and supervised by Queensland Public Works Department under Andrew B. Leven

Builder: Units 1 & 2: Albert Herbert Mason; Unit 3: day labour

Status: Standing

References:

Telegraph (Brisbane), 28 July 1933, late city edition, p.7.

Building (Sydney), 12 August 1933, p.14-25 & cover.

Telegraph (Brisbane), 5 May 1936, city final edition, p.10.

Plans in Queensland State Archives, series ID 1162, item ID 586091-586096, 586120-586168, 586351-586358.

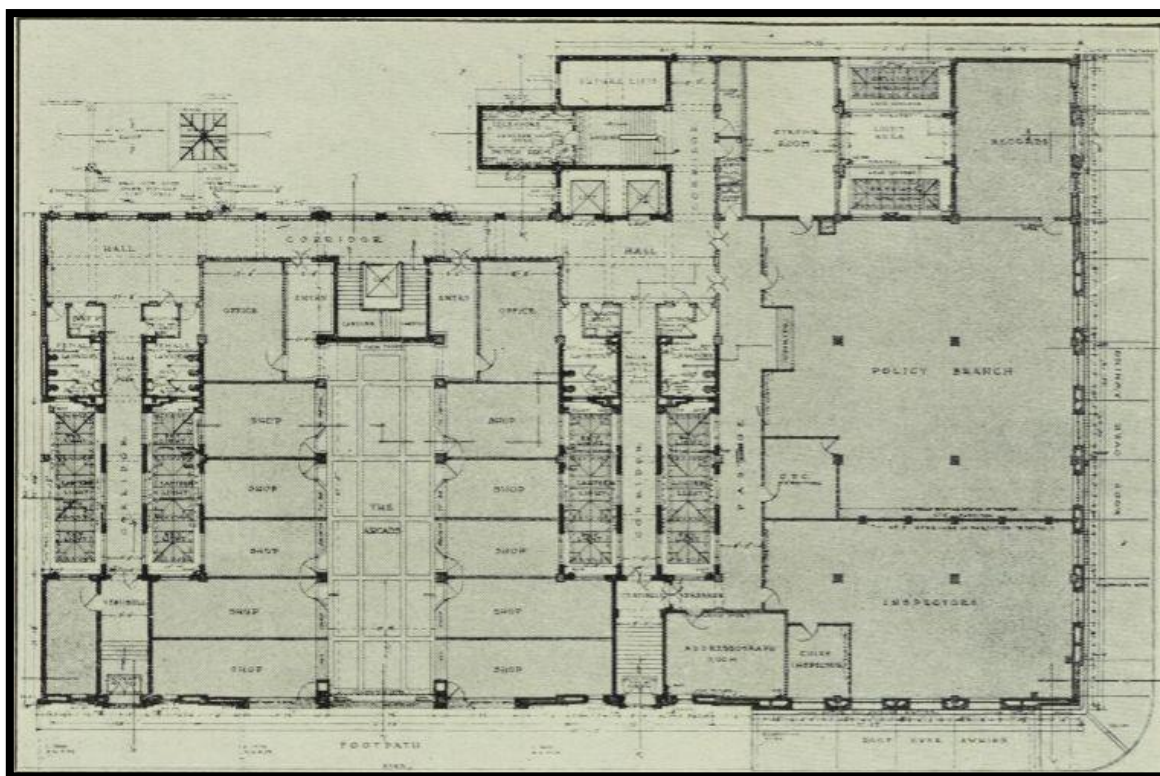


Adelaide Street frontage, 1937

Showing Unit 2 (State Government Insurance Office, on corner) and Unit 3 (Railways Department)

For the general background to the development of the Anzac Square complex, see C2.

In October 1928 the state and federal governments signed a formal agreement, ceding land for the development of Anzac Square, and agreeing to erect complementary buildings on either side of the square, on the basis of a concept developed by the Commonwealth Chief Architect, John S. Murdoch. The Queensland Public Works Department then commenced work on detailed plans for the first two units of the State Government Offices, and these were complete by early 1931. Construction commenced later that year and continued until 1933, using the standard method of a steel-frame with reinforced concrete floors and roof. Unit 2 was a seven-storey building on the corner of Adelaide and Edward Streets, and was occupied by the State Government Insurance Office (SGIO). Unit 1, for the Public Curator's office, was adjacent, fronting Edward Street, but because of the upward slope of Edward Street it was one storey lower, and the ground floor of Unit 1 corresponded to the second level of Unit 2.



First floor plan of Units 1 and 2

Showing arcade off Edward Street, and adjacent light courts

There was a light court opening off Edward Street, between the two units. There were further embryonic light courts on the outer sides of the new buildings, erected in anticipation of the additional units to come. At the rear was a courtyard which would become a central court when the whole complex was complete. A driveway with cast-iron gates gave access to this courtyard from Adelaide Street. There were shopfronts in Adelaide Street, and a shopping arcade opened off Edward Street. A steel-framed, copper-sheeted awning, with embossed

decoration, was wrapped around the street elevations, and stepped upwards as it ascended Edward Street.



Adelaide Street shop-fronts



Edward Street awning

The lower two floors (from the level of Adelaide Street) were faced in Helidon freestone, with banded rustication, on a granite base. A string course separated them from the upper levels, whose brick curtain walls were rendered in imitation of the treatment of the lower floors. The spandrels between the large steel windows were simply decorated in low relief, but there was a balcony at the top level, and a large bracketed cornice above that.

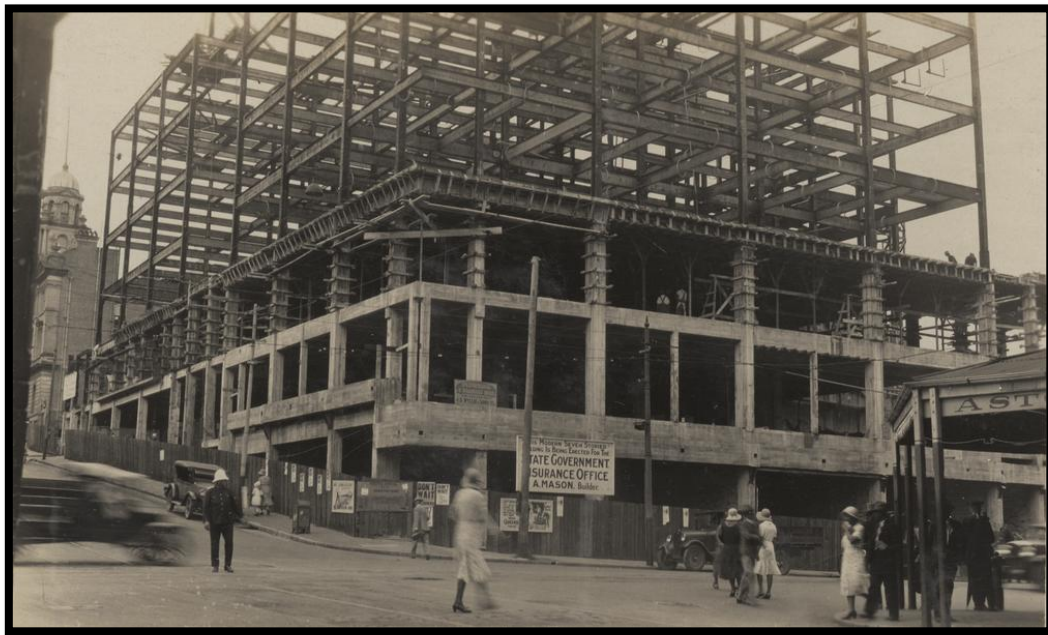


Insurance chamber, State Government Insurance Office

Internally, the most impressive space was the insurance chamber opening off Adelaide Street, decorated in Ulam marble and Queensland timbers. The Queensland coat of arms was worked into the vitrified tile floor. The corridors, vestibules and stairways at the lower levels of the two buildings were lined to dado height in marble, with mosaic tile floors. A more economical terrazzo was used for the upper floors. The street frontages, light wells and courtyard allowed plenty of natural lighting and ventilation, and there was also a system of ducted ventilation using large fans.

The third unit, to house the Railways Department, was built in 1934-36, and completed the Adelaide Street frontage and provided the first section of the façade to Anzac Square. It was the first unit of the complex to be air-conditioned.

Work on Unit 4, adjacent to Unit 3 and facing Anzac Square, commenced in 1940 but had to be mothballed during the war. It was finally opened in 1948. The two remaining units, facing Ann Street, were not completed until 1960.



Units 1 and 2 under construction

C2. ANZAC SQUARE



December 1932

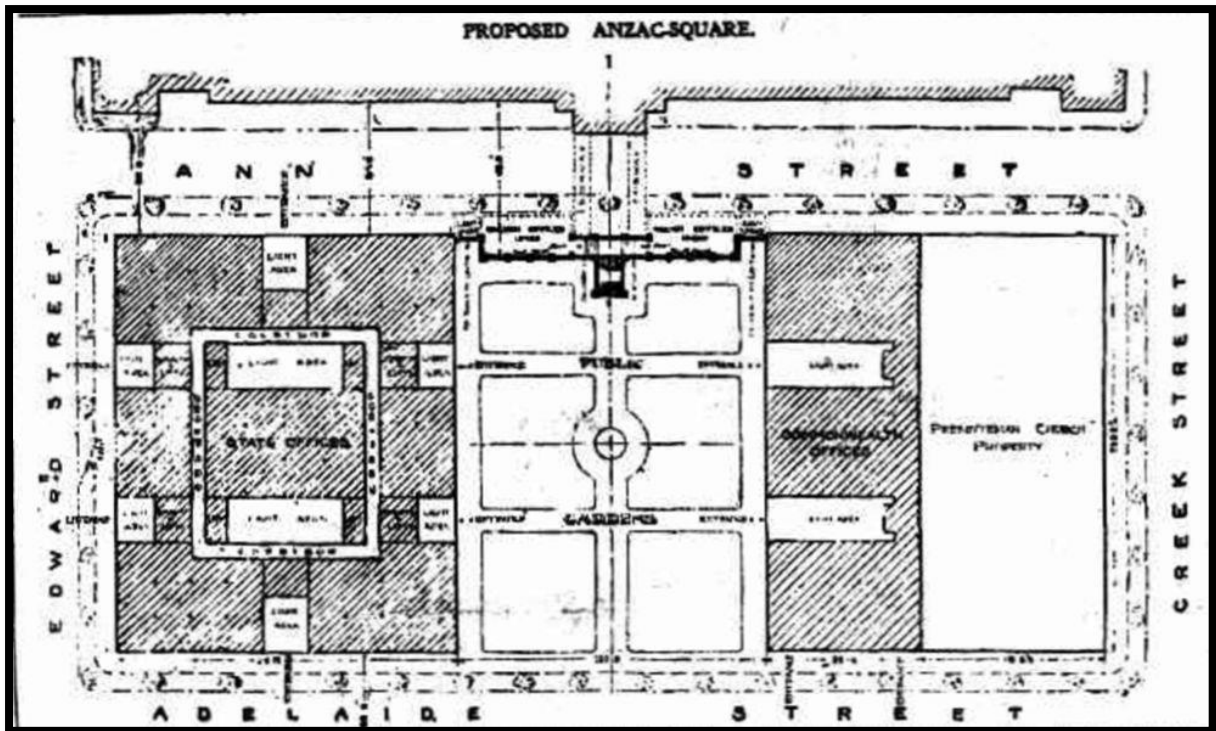
Adelaide Street is on the left of the photo, and Ann Street on the right

It has already been noted that Governor Gipps had opposed the establishment of any public squares or parks in the centre of the fledgling Brisbane township. When the civic authorities later struggled to create such open spaces, they were forced to make use of areas that had originally been ear-marked for other purposes, such as the reserve for an Anglican church between William and George Streets, which eventually developed into Queen's Gardens, or the water reserve in Albert Street which, as we have seen, provided a site for the City Hall and King George Square. In the same way, the strip of land which had been reserved as a pound for straying stock, in the block bounded by Adelaide, Creek, Ann and Edward Streets, was ultimately developed into Brisbane's war memorial.

The name "Anzac Square" was first used in 1916 in a report to the State Government proposing the erection of a war memorial in Brisbane. In 1920 a committee was formed to develop the proposal, and it recommended the use of the whole block in front of the Central Railway Station. Central Station was seen, with dubious validity even then, as the entrance to the city, and therefore the area in front of it was considered a suitably prominent site for the memorial. The southern end (fronting Edward Street) of this large city block was owned by the State Government and housed a fire station and a primary school. Adjoining this to the north was a strip of Commonwealth land containing military facilities, including a drill hall. The northern end of the block (fronting Creek Street) was owned by the Presbyterian Church.

The contentious question was how much of this block to devote to the memorial. In the years immediately following the First World War the memory of the huge sacrifices of the

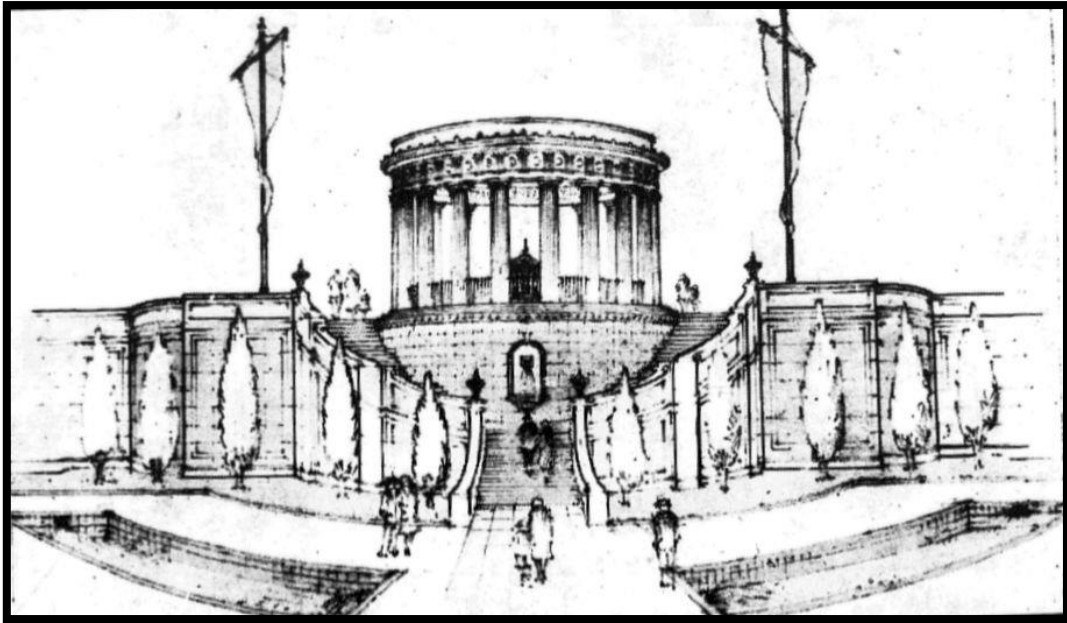
Australian troops loomed large, and the returned servicemen's association (and much of public opinion) favoured using the whole block as a memorial. However to many bureaucrats and politicians this viewpoint seemed extreme. The state and federal governments agreed to cede only some of their land, and so create a central strip running from Ann Street to Adelaide Street, in front of the main entrance to the station.



1922 plan for development of Anzac Square

At an early stage it was suggested that both governments should erect large office buildings on either side of the central square, to create a monumental public space. There was an obvious need to co-ordinate these projects, and as early as 1922 the Prime Minister and the Queensland premier were in correspondence on the matter. The Commonwealth's Chief Architect, John Smith Murdoch, produced a design in a Stripped Classical style, which was accepted as a basic concept for the development of both sides of the square. However it was understood that the Queensland Public Works Department's architects would devise their own detailed plans for the state's buildings. One major point of difference which emerged was the decision of the State Government to introduce shop-fronts (with awnings) at the ground level of its buildings, to provide revenue to help finance the project.

Debate about the project rumbled on for some years, but finally in 1928 an architectural competition was held for the design of the central memorial, and the plans of the Sydney architects Stafford Harman Buchanan and Frederick Mountford Cowper were selected. In October of that year the state and federal governments signed a formal agreement, ceding land for the square and agreeing to erect complementary buildings on either side.



Original design of the war memorial for Anzac Square
(Buchanan and Cowper, 1928)

The law which allowed the City Council to resume land for street-widening purposes did not apply to the state and federal governments. However as early as 1919, both of those authorities agreed to cede to the Council the necessary 14-foot strip of land along Adelaide Street, providing that the Council resumed the corresponding portion of the land owned by the Presbyterian Church at the northern end of the block. As already noted, the Church successfully challenged the amount of compensation offered by the Council, but the matter was eventually resolved and in 1925 the section of Adelaide Street adjacent to the proposed Anzac Square was widened.



Adelaide Street frontage of Anzac Square, about 1928

The roadway has been widened but the old Normal School still stands on the corner of Edward Street. It was demolished early in 1928.

The memorial was erected in 1929-30 by F.J. Corbett and Sons, under the supervision of Alfred H. Foster, the City Architect. It is a simple design, consisting of eighteen Doric columns supporting a circular entablature embellished with rosettes and acroteria. At the centre of the circular enclosure stands a bronze brazier, which was executed by Wunderlich Limited. Helidon freestone was used as the building material, on a granite base. Beneath the memorial are museums and a tiled subway under Ann Street, connecting with Central Station. This subway was probably the first concession on the part of the civic authorities to the fact that the increasing level of traffic in Brisbane's streets was becoming a hazard to pedestrians. The City Architect was responsible for the layout of paths and gardens in the square.¹

For the history of the buildings erected on either side of the square, see C1 and C3. It would be many years before the State Government buildings were completed, and the Commonwealth buildings never advanced beyond their first stage. This inevitably had a negative impact on the appearance of the square.

During the 1960s and 1970s the City Council developed plans to redevelop Anzac Square and extend it across Adelaide Street to Queen Street, in conjunction with the creation of an underground carpark. There was considerable opposition to this proposal, and the Post Office Square was not finally constructed until the early 1980s. As part of this project, elevated walkways were erected across Adelaide Street to Ann Street, partly obscuring the facades of both the State and Commonwealth office buildings on either side of the square.

¹ See the contemporary description in *Building* (Sydney), 12 November 1930, p.46-48c.

C3. COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT OFFICES

Address: 224-232 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1934-36

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: John Smith Murdoch

Builder: Albert Herbert Mason

Status: Standing

References:

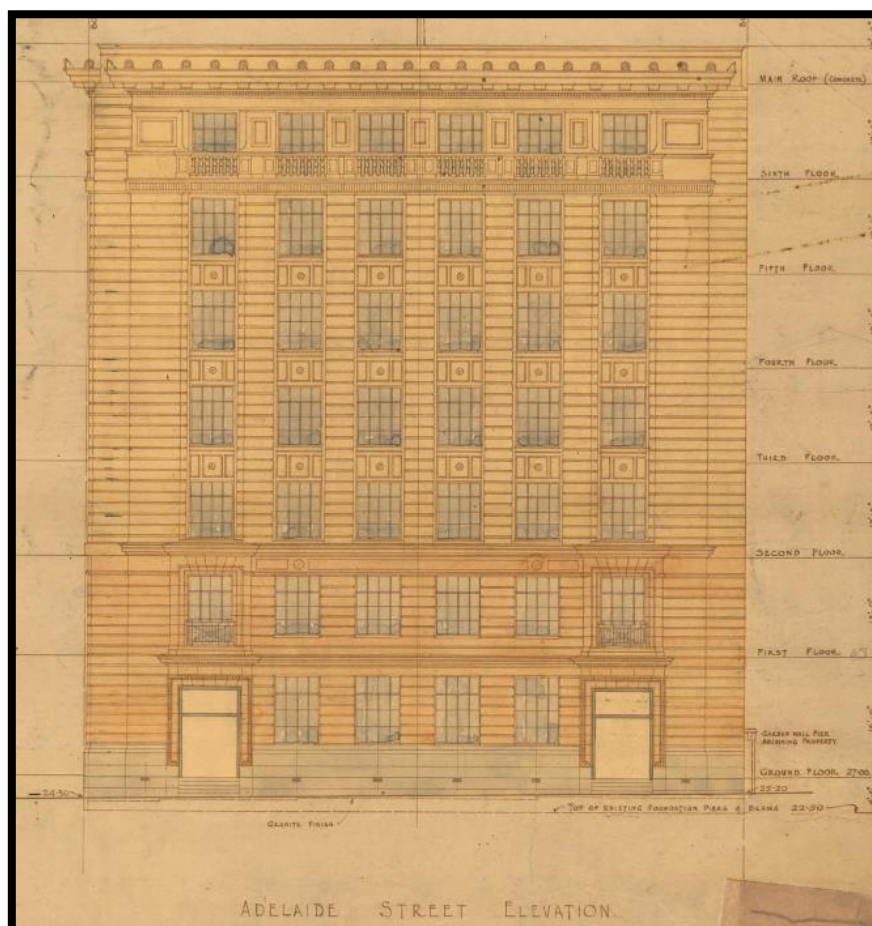
Brisbane Courier, 7 October 1927, p.7.

Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland, 10 July 1934, p.9-10.

Brisbane Courier, 17 July 1934, p.15.

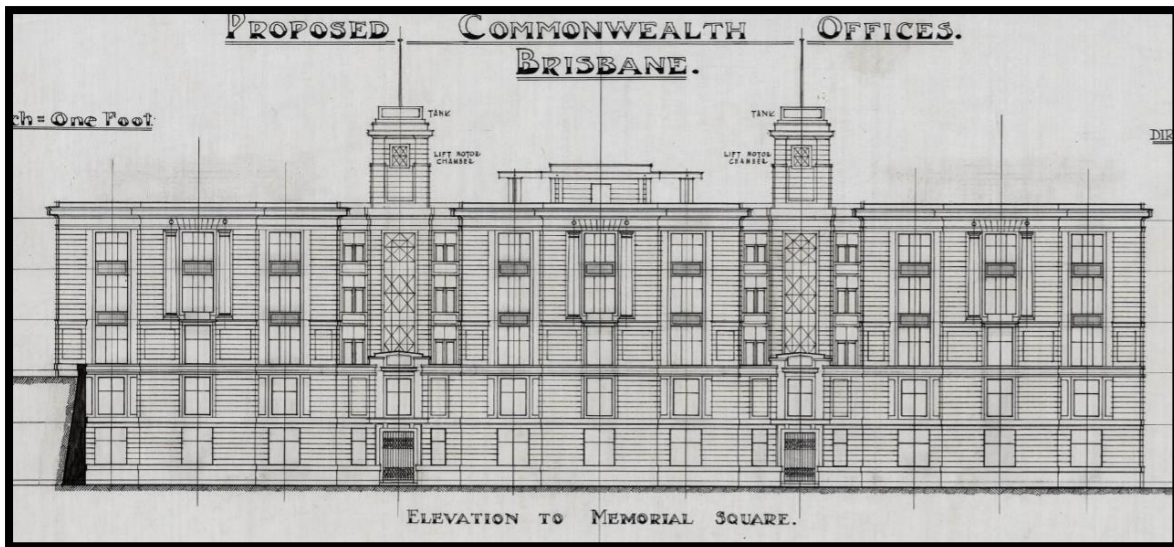
Original 1923 plans in National Archives of Australia, Brisbane Office, series J2774.

Revised plans 1934 in National Archives of Australia, Brisbane Office, series J2774;
and in Canberra Office, series A6134.



Adelaide Street elevation, 1934

For the general background to the development of the Anzac Square complex, see C2.



Anzac Square elevation of early five-storey plan, 1922

In July 1921, a report by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works supported the proposals which had been formulated in Brisbane for the development of Anzac Square. The architects in the Commonwealth Department of Works prepared initial plans for a five-storey building, extending from Adelaide Street to Ann Street. These were similar to the final plan, although a little more elaborate, with giant columns flanking some of the windows at the upper levels. The light courts, with the lift towers behind them, were already envisaged. A memo dated 10 April 1922 from the Commonwealth director-general of works (Percy T. Owen) to the Commonwealth works director for Queensland noted that the site was too narrow for a central light area, but "areas let in from the street (or in this case, the square) will afford perfect light" and that "by these indented areas, probably a building very interesting in appearance will be secured."

In a later memo of 19 August the director-general proposed porphyry or granite as facing on the ground floor, with plastered brick above, "unless the State Government wishes to adopt brick and stone." The Queensland works director replied on 1 September that "so far, in Brisbane no public building of any standing has been erected with plaster front, and it is questionable whether the new Commonwealth offices should be carried out in this manner above the ground."¹

In a statement to Federal Parliament in August the following year, the responsible minister conceded that the building was "considerably in excess of the initial requirements, but it may be found advisable to provide a structure of this size even if portions of it have to be let pending expansion of the Commonwealth Government requirements."² By the following month the architects were producing plans for a seven-storey building, which became the basis for the concept accepted by the State Government as the model for future development

¹ National Archives of Australia, Brisbane Office, J618, 1923/2628, item 2035118.

² Commonwealth Hansard, 24 August 1923.

of Anzac Square. This concept is generally attributed to John S. Murdoch, the chief architect for the Federal Government.

However the project remained on the drawing board. This was partly because of the continuing debate about the size of the memorial square, but concerns about the excess of space in the building were also a hindrance to implementation. In May 1927 the Commonwealth Parliamentary Committee of Public Works held hearings in Brisbane at which this problem was discussed. In September 1930 it was suggested that the Commonwealth Bank buy the land and erect a suitable building, acceptable to the State Government, and the Commonwealth would then rent office space in the bank building. In August 1931 the bank withdrew from this plan.

In 1932, as a compromise, it was proposed to erect just a section of the building, at the Adelaide Street end. By this time the state offices on the other side of the square were under construction, and on 23 June 1933 the Queensland premier, William Forgan Smith, wrote to the Prime Minister, urging the Commonwealth "to begin its share of the undertaking," especially as in those difficult Depression years such a project "would tend considerably to alleviate the unemployment at present existing in the building and allied trades."³

Clearly the time was ripe, and in September 1933 federal cabinet approved the project. It was then proposed that the section to be erected should be at the Ann Street end of the block, but the principal designing architect argued for the construction of the Adelaide Street end, and this view prevailed. In July 1934 the tender of Albert Mason was accepted and work began.



Revised 1934 plan: elevation to Anzac Square

Like the state offices across the square, the Commonwealth offices are of steel-frame and reinforced-concrete construction. They stand on a granite plinth, with a facing of Helidon

³ National Archives of Australia, Brisbane Office, J56, QL337 PART 1D, item 337982.

freestone in banded rustication at the first two levels, and brick walls above that, rendered to match the lower levels. The Commonwealth building has no shop fronts or awning, but it is otherwise very similar to the state buildings (C1), with a string course above the second level and balconies at the highest level, all topped with a prominent bracketed cornice. Close inspection reveals that the finish of the Commonwealth building is superior to that of its state counterpart, with (for example) cable mouldings around the doors and some other low-relief sculptural adornment.



Details of exterior stonework

The bronze-sheeted entry doors survive, and the Adelaide Street entrance closest to Creek Street gives access to a lift lobby panelled in marble and originally floored in mosaic tiles. The corridors of the upper levels are paved in terrazzo. A second lift is situated at the back of the light court, and is surrounded by the only set of stairs provided in the original design. With an alleyway on the side of the building towards Creek Street, it was possible to provide at least some natural lighting from all sides. The brass letter chutes survive.



Ground floor interior



Recent view from Post Office Square

In 1948 a proposal was made to initially complete the Commonwealth office building through to Ann Street, and later extend it to Creek Street,⁴ but this never eventuated. In 1968 the Federal Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works approved the construction of a seventeen-storey office block along the Ann Street frontage, from Anzac Square to Creek Street. The custodians of Anzac Square were angered that this building overshadowed the war memorial, and they felt that it betrayed the Federal government's original commitment to the layout of the square and its surroundings.

⁴ See the perspective drawing in *Courier-Mail*, 13 April 1948, p.3.

C4. TERRICA HOUSE

Address: 236-252 Adelaide Street (cnr Creek Street), Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1925-26

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: Richard Gailey junior

Builder: George Henry Heaven

Status: Demolished 1990

References:

BCC building register no.5577, 7/7/1925.

Courier-Mail, 11 December 1945, p.3.



1959

A large parcel of land fronting Creek Street, and extending back along both Adelaide and Ann Streets, had been in the possession of the Presbyterian Church for many years. There were various structures on this property, including a two-storey brick building on the corner of Adelaide and Creek Streets, which since about 1908 had been the offices of the wool-broking firm, Sturmfels Limited.

At the time when resumptions were taking place for the widening of Adelaide Street, the buildings on the Presbyterian Church property were on lease to the real estate agents, Isles Love & Company, and that lease still had about eight years to run. When the City Council had resumed the land and truncated the alignment on both the Adelaide and Ann Street frontages, Isles Love offered to purchase it (at a price which was very favourable from the Council's point of view), and also to undertake the necessary alterations to the buildings in those two streets.

The old building on the corner of Adelaide and Creek Streets was demolished, and Isles Love commissioned Richard Gailey junior to design a two-storey brick building, with shops on the ground floor and offices above. Gailey's design was a fairly simple one, in face-brick rising to a dentilled cornice, with cement facings. The end bays and corner bay were accentuated by pilasters of moulded brick. A cantilevered awning wrapped around the building on both street-frontages.

The new building was called Terrica House. The ground floor was occupied by showrooms for car dealers, and the basement was later developed as a car service station. In 1937-38 two further floors were added to the building, again under the supervision of Richard Gailey junior.



Creek Street frontage, 1963
Decorated for the Royal Visit

In 1942 the Army requisitioned the building for the duration of the Second World War. Soon after the war, the Federal Government purchased Terrica House and turned it into an annexe of the adjacent Commonwealth Government Offices (C3), by erecting crossings at the upper levels to connect the two buildings. At that time, the government had a long-term plan to demolish Terrica House and extend the Commonwealth office building, in its original style, as far as Creek Street,¹ but this never eventuated.

Terrica House was demolished in 1990 and in its place the government erected the 25-storey Terrica Place (opened in 1996) to house the Australian Taxation Office.

¹ See the perspective drawing in *Courier-Mail*, 13 April 1948, p.3.

D1. NEW SOUTH WALES MONT DE PIÉTÉ

Address: 254-256 Adelaide Street (cnr Creek Street), Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1925

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: Hall and Prentice

Builder: Marberete Company

Status: Standing

References:

BCC building register no.5504, 11/5/1925.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 29 December 1925, p.14.



1925

The smaller adjacent building still under construction on the right is Austin House (D2)

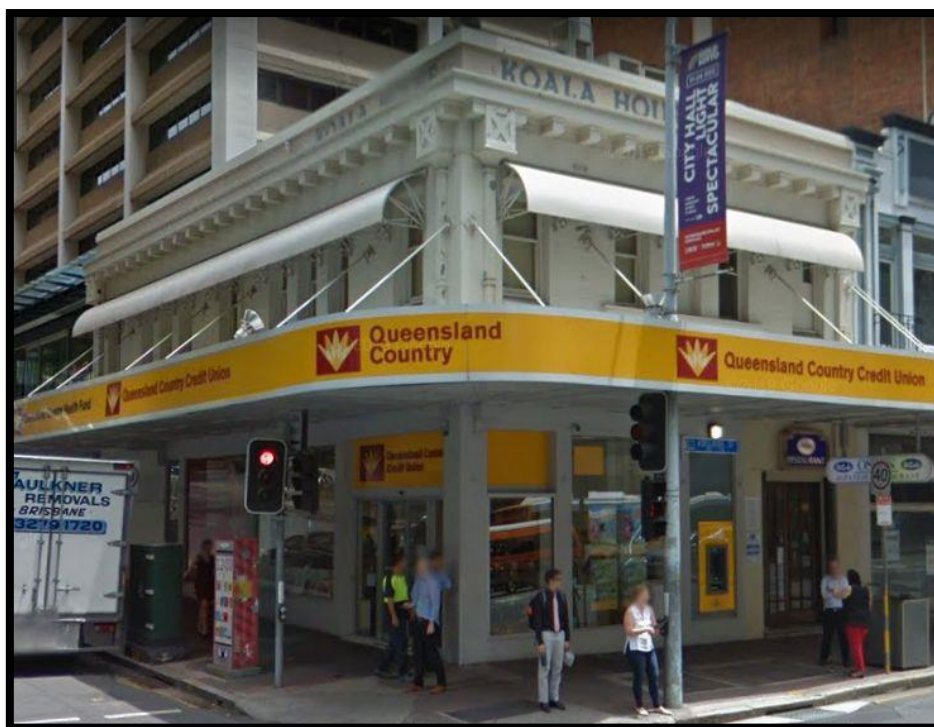
The north-west corner of Adelaide and Creek Streets had long been the site of a warehouse belonging to the hardware merchants, Alfred Shaw and Company. In 1922 that firm erected a new three-storey building in Creek Street, immediately beside their old warehouse, and the corner allotment passed into the hands of George Willoughby Whatmore, a leading figure in the expanding automobile trade in Brisbane. In 1923 Whatmore sold this site to the New South Wales Mont de Piété Deposit and Investment Company, a Sydney firm which had been operating in Brisbane since 1908.

Shortly afterwards, in early 1924, the City Council resumed the allotment for street-widening. After truncating the allotment, they subdivided it and resold the corner section to the NSW Mont de Piété, while a larger section with frontage to Adelaide Street was sold to Gordon and

Gotch (D3). The NSW Mont de Piété further subdivided their property and sold a small allotment fronting Adelaide Street to George Whatmore, the former owner (D2).

The NSW Mont de Piété commissioned Hall and Prentice, the architects for the City Hall, to design a two-storey building, with shop-front at ground level and offices above. It was a simple but elegant design, in face-brick, with a prominent dentilled cornice supporting a small parapet. A cantilevered awning wrapped around the façade on both street-frontages.

The northern end of Adelaide Street was becoming the centre of Brisbane's automobile trade, and in 1930 a car showroom was opened on the ground floor of this building. After the Second World War, the building became the headquarters of the Grazcos Cooperative.



2015

D2. AUSTIN HOUSE

Address: 258-260 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1925-26

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: Hall and Prentice

Builder: William Cunningham

Status: Standing

References:

BCC building register no.5605, 4/9/1925.

Telegraph (Brisbane), 30 July 1927, p.12.



2009

For the history of the ownership of this allotment, and a photo of the building under construction, see D1.

George Willoughby Whatmore had been active in the motor trade in Brisbane since 1913. In 1926 he established a new company, Austin Cars Limited, to act as local agents for the

Austin Motor Company of Birmingham, England, and he erected this small, two-storey brick building as the headquarters of the new business. Not surprisingly, he called it Austin House.

His architects, Hall and Prentice, who had also designed the adjacent NSW Mont de Piété building (D1), produced an elegant Free Classical design. The façade of the upper floor is divided into bays by pilasters of differing sizes, and the two smaller windows have balconettes. The high parapet accommodates an ample name-panel, flanked by fascies.



1927

D3. GORDON AND GOTCH

Address: 262-266 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1925-27

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: Atkinson and Conrad

Builder: Walter Taylor

Status: Standing

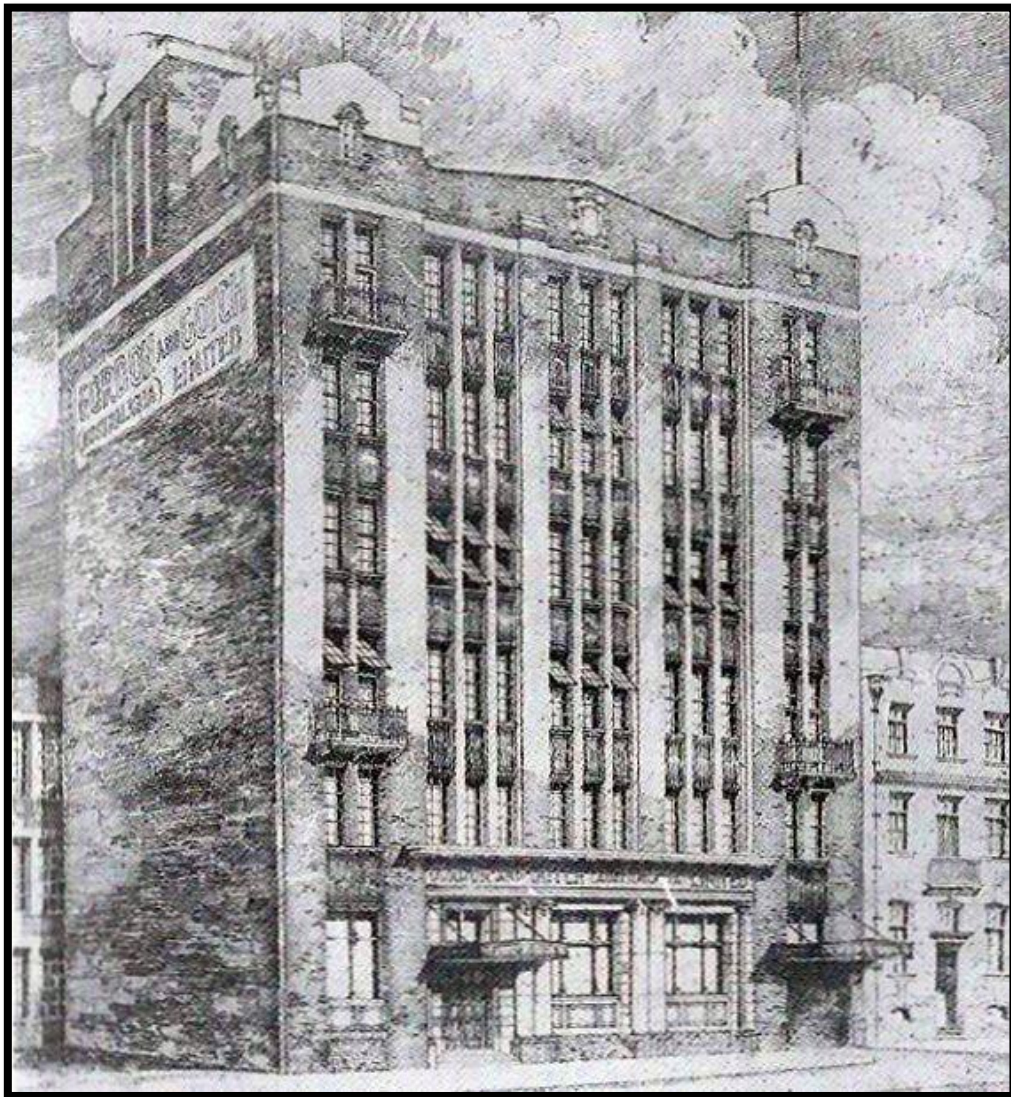
References:

BCC building register no.6263, 4/12/1925.

Brisbane Courier, 15 October 1925, p.10.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), 9 March 1926, p.18.

Plans in Brisbane City Archives, BCA 3008.



Perspective drawing of original design

For the history of the ownership of this allotment, see D1.

The firm of Gordon and Gotch were nationwide distributors of books and magazines, who had first established themselves in Brisbane in 1875. For almost fifty years they operated from premises at 212-214 Queen Street, before moving to this new building in 1927. The architects of this six-storey (plus basement) warehouse were the partnership established by Henry Wallace Atkinson and Arnold Henry Conrad.

As the firm's operations were essentially wholesale, this was a utilitarian rather than a representational building. Nonetheless, its sheer size made it an impressive structure in Brisbane at the time of its construction.



Detail of front elevation of ground floor

The façade of the ground floor, as originally designed, was strangely asymmetrical. This was the inevitable result of the need to provide a vehicle entrance on the right-hand side, but even the three central bays, with their modest Classical embellishment, were asymmetrical, having the main entrance on the left-hand side, beneath a small awning. These three bays were articulated by paired Ionic columns or pilasters, supporting an entablature which originally spanned those three bays only. The original plans called for copper entrance doors, leading to a vestibule panelled in marble, but it is not clear if these were actually executed.

The upper floors of the façade are faced in glazed red bricks, with the spandrels rendered in a simple pattern. The copper spandrels originally planned apparently fell victim to cost-cutting. A contemporary newspaper reported that "the vertical lines of the architecture strike a new note in Brisbane."¹ The front is divided into five bays, and the two outer bays project slightly, but even the bays are further divided by continuous brick mullions, which span the five upper floors. The generous fenestration provided by the steel windows is typical of an era when artificial lighting was still something of a luxury, and mechanical ventilation was rare.

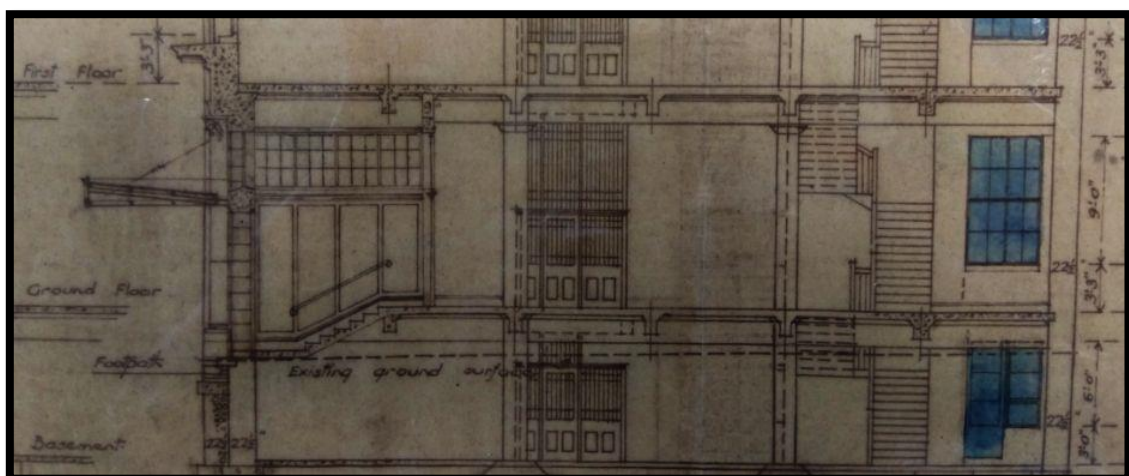
¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 15 October 1925, p.10.

There is little other adornment of the façade, with just two balconettes on the fifth level, and a parapet which carries a central crest with the date "1926" and two statuary niches, which apparently have always stood empty.



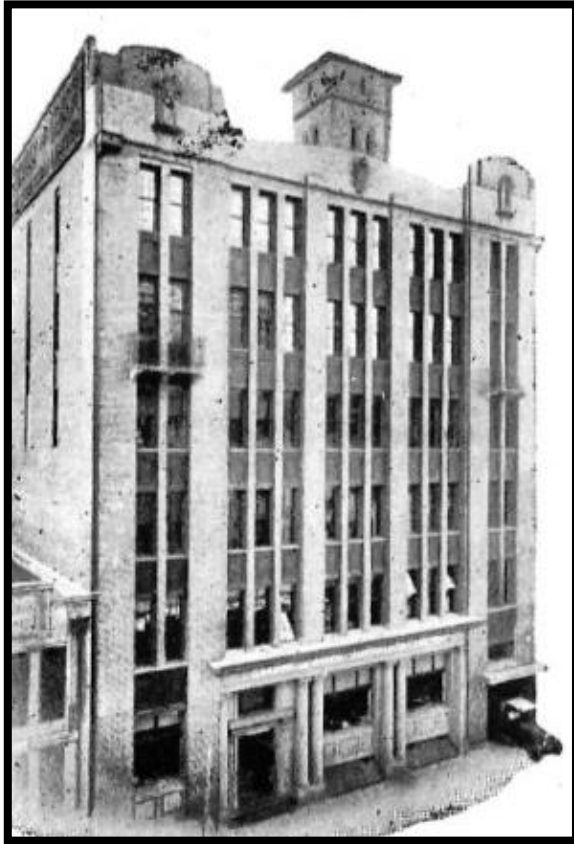
Façade details

Structurally, the building was erected of reinforced concrete. At the rear, there was a light area in the southern corner (which lit the staircase) and a fire escape on the northern corner. The flat roof supported the water-tower for the fire sprinklers, and also housed separate lunchrooms for male and female staff. A passenger lift was placed centrally on the southern side of each floor, and a goods lift on the northern side.



Cross-section of ground floor and basement

Gordon and Gotch remained in this building until 1957. They then moved to a striking new building on the corner of George and Charlotte Streets, which had been designed by Moulds and McMinn.



Early and recent photos

D4. BUTLER BROTHERS

Address: 268-276 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1929

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Chambers and Ford

Builder: Alex Anderson

Status: Demolished 1973

References:

BCC building register no.18460, 18/3/1929.



Aerial photo, 1969

The Dunlop Rubber Company began operations in Brisbane around 1900, an initiative driven by the increasing popularity of cycling, and shortly to be accelerated by the growth of the automobile industry. In 1904 an attractive two-storey brick building was completed for them in Adelaide Street.¹ It was probably designed by Claude Chambers, who certainly supervised the 1910 extensions. Eventually this became a three-storey building, with a central vehicle entrance which led to a yard at the rear. In 1926 it was resumed by the City Council for street-widening, and by 1928 Dunlop Rubber had found alternative premises.

About 1928 the truncated allotment was purchased by Butler Brothers, an old Brisbane firm originally established as coachware and saddlery merchants. In 1926 Butler Brothers had taken over the Alfred Shaw warehouse in Creek Street, immediately beside the NSW Mont de Piété building (D1), and the rear of that allotment was contiguous with the rear of the former Dunlop premises. This purchase thus allowed Butler Brothers to create a large retail complex with frontages to both Creek and Adelaide Streets.

¹ It is visible in the perspective drawing of the Gordon and Gotch building; see D3 above.

To remodel the Dunlop building, Butler Brothers commissioned the firm of Chambers and Ford, represented in Brisbane by Eric Marshall Ford. It was reported in the press that the building was "receiving scientific treatment. The existing [side and rear] walls are being retained, the unrequired portion [the façade] having been literally disconnected preparatory to demolition."² Unfortunately it has not proved possible to find any satisfactory image or description of this building. It remained in the possession of Butler Brothers until shortly before its demolition in 1973.

² *Brisbane Courier*, 7 May 1929, p.10.

D5. YWCA

Address: 278-280 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1928-29

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Lange Leopold Powell (Atkinson, Powell and Conrad)

Builder: John Hutchinson

Status: Demolished 1981

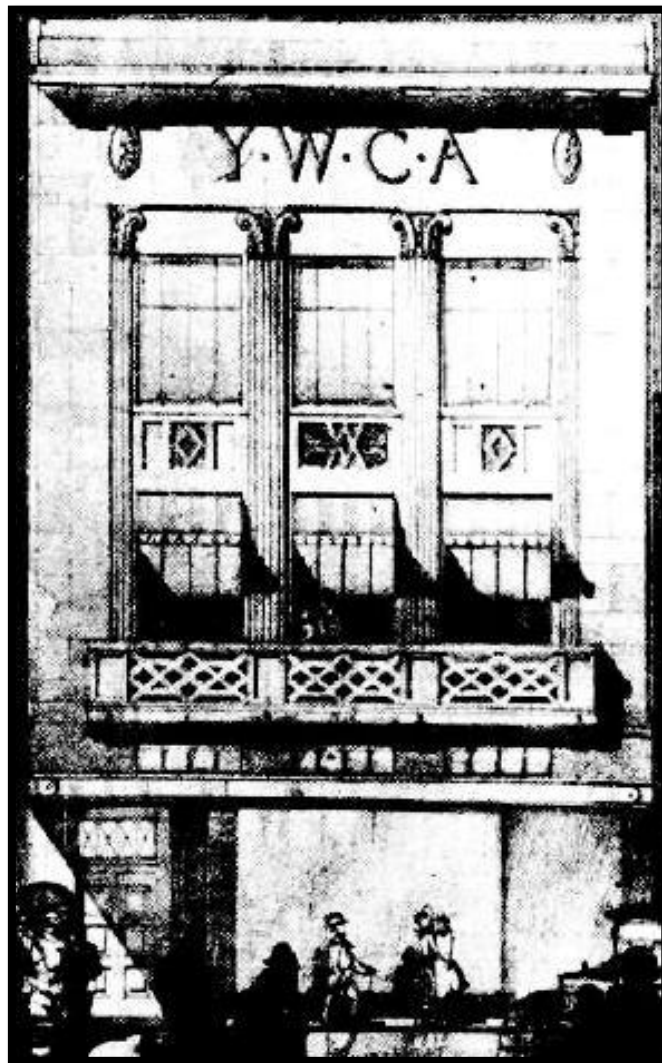
References:

BCC building register no.18097, 1/2/1929.

BCC building register no.18522, 5/4/1929.

Brisbane Courier, 15 February 1929, p.18.

Telegraph (Brisbane), 24 June 1929, p.14.



Perspective drawing of the original plan

The Young Women's Christian Association had been active in Brisbane since 1883, although a local branch was not officially established until 1899. In 1914 they obtained clubrooms in the Adelaide Buildings, opposite the future site of Anzac Square, but in 1919 they found more permanent accommodation on the two upper floors of the former Ormsby Buildings, at 278 Adelaide Street.

In 1926 the City Council issued a resumption notice for these premises, but the Association were able to retain their ownership of the building, after compensation had been paid, on the proviso that the building was realigned. This work was entrusted to the architect Lange L. Powell, of the firm Atkinson, Powell and Conrad. A shop-front was inserted at ground level, beneath a cantilevered awning. Beside it, a vestibule gave access to a gym at the rear and the clubrooms on the upper floors. The very artistic façade of the two upper floors was spanned by four large fluted pilasters with foliated capitals, separated by large windows with carved spandrels. A balcony adorned the first floor, with a distinctive and unusual balustrade. The club's initials were picked out in large letters below a heavy cornice.



Early photo

D6. ELECTROLUX HOUSE

Address: 282-284 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1927-28

Nature of Project: Remodelling

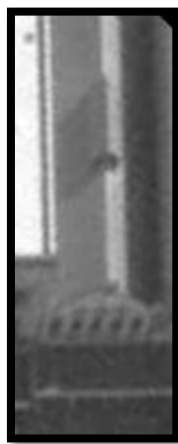
Architect: Thomas Blair Moncrieff Wightman

Builder: Walter Henry Morse

Status: Demolished 1981

References:

BCC building register no.13809, 30/9/1927.



Aerial photo, 1969

This two-storey brick building, on a 33-foot (10 metre) wide frontage, had a long association with the motor trade in Brisbane. As early as 1920 it was the site of the Hupmobile Motor Garage, and from 1925 to 1927 it was the premises of Hobson and Moss Motors.

In 1926, when the allotment was resumed for street-widening, the owner was the Brisbane businessman, George Alfred Louis Uhl. He retained ownership of the allotment after it was truncated, and in 1927 commissioned the architect T.B.M. Wightman to remodel the building to the new street-alignment. Unfortunately it has not proved possible to find any satisfactory image or description of this building, although it is fairly clear that there was a gabled front above the cantilevered awning.

The newly remodelled building was let to Electrolux Limited, distributors of vacuum cleaners, who had established a Brisbane office in Queen Street in 1925, and it was named Electrolux House. In about 1935, the Electrolux company moved to new premises at the other end of Adelaide Street, and this building again became the premises of a series of auto dealerships. In 1938 the Mayfair Motor Cycle Company opened a branch here, and they remained at this address for many years.

D7. STOTTS BUSINESS COLLEGE

Address: 286-292 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1929

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Richard Gailey junior

Builder: George Henry Heaven

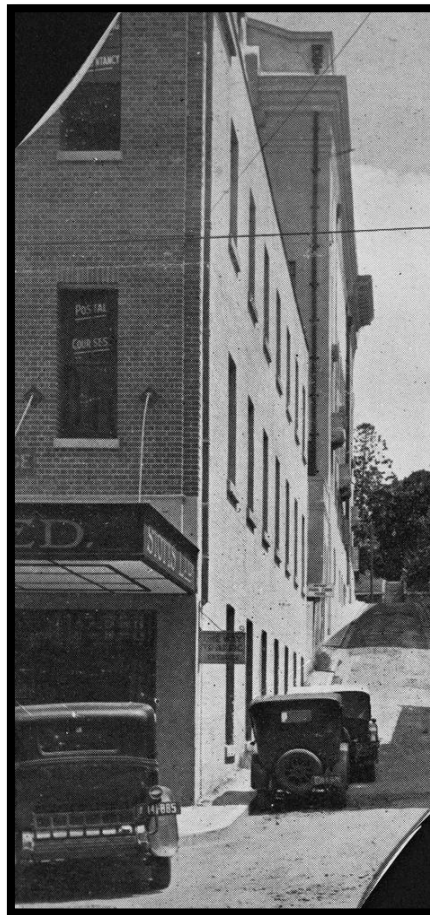
Status: Demolished 1981

References:

BCC building register no.19902, 23/9/1929.

Telegraph (Brisbane), 8 January 1930, city edition, p.10.

Brisbane Courier, 14 April 1932, p.15.



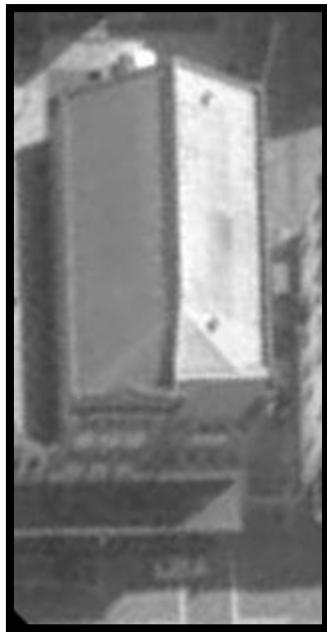
Hutton Lane corner, 1931

The large three-storey brick warehouse on the southern corner of Adelaide Street and Hutton Lane had been the premises of the printing firm, Smith and Paterson, since 1918. The City Council resumed this allotment in 1926 and truncated it, but could not find a buyer when they tried to resell it in 1928.

They were eventually able to negotiate a sale in 1929, by dividing the building into two sections. The northern section, which benefited from the additional frontage to Hutton Lane, was sold to Stotts Business College, and the southern section was sold to the General Financing and Trading Company. The two new owners jointly commissioned Richard Gailey junior to supervise the remodelling of the building to the new street-alignment.

Unfortunately it has not proved possible to find any satisfactory image or description of this building. The limited evidence available suggests that Gailey designed a very plain brick façade. The southern section apparently had a gabled pediment, but the northern section seems to have been treated differently, possibly with a hipped roof. There was a cantilevered awning above the shop-fronts at ground level.

For the northern section, lofty classrooms were provided on the two upper levels, no doubt making the most of the illumination and ventilation provided by the frontages to Adelaide Street and Hutton Lane. In the southern section, a hardwood ramp was inserted beside the shop-front, to allow vehicles to ascend to the upper floor. This section of the building was of course used by auto dealerships.



Aerial photo, 1969

D8. HARDING CHAMBERS

Address: 294-300 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1927-28

Nature of Project: Remodelling

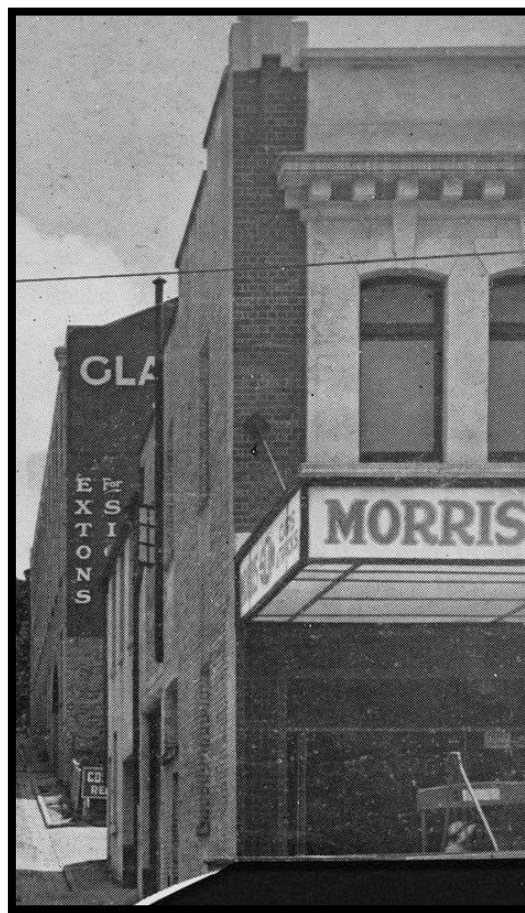
Architect: Thomas Blair Moncrieff Wightman

Builder: George Henry Heaven

Status: Demolished 1972

References:

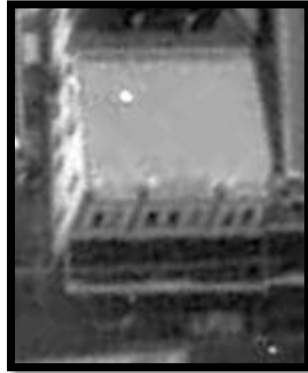
BCC building register no.13406, 11/8/1927.



Hutton Lane corner, 1931

Early in 1903 the solicitors, W.H. Wilson and H.B. Hemming, moved into new premises on the northern corner of Hutton Lane and Adelaide Street, which had recently been erected for them by the builder John Gemmell. Herbert B. Hemming was still the owner of this property in 1926, when it was resumed for street-widening. He retained ownership after the allotment had been truncated, and in 1927 commissioned T.B.M. Wightman to supervise the remodelling of the two-storey brick building to the new street-alignment, and the construction of additions at the rear.

Unfortunately it has not proved possible to find any satisfactory image or description of this building. The façade was in three bays, and the upper floor was largely rendered in cement, with a prominent dentilled cornice and a low parapet. The parapet of the wider central bay was probably accentuated in some manner. The ground floor housed a car dealership, and the upper floor contained offices for leasing.



Aerial photo, 1969

D9. UNIVERSAL MOTORS

Address: 302-308 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1926-27

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: Atkinson and Conrad

Builder: Joseph and Evan Leslie Rees

Status: Demolished 1972

References:

BCC building register no.10536, 15/12/1926.

Telegraph (Brisbane), 2 November 1927, p.5.

Brisbane Courier, 22 November 1927, p.9.



1949

This was another Adelaide Street allotment which was still vacant in the 1920s. It was owned by Valentine James Howard, managing director of the Howard Motor Company, which was based on the other side of Adelaide Street. This vacant lot was possibly being used as a carpark or car saleyard when the City Council issued a resumption notice for it in 1926. Howard was able to retain ownership after the block was truncated, and he then proceeded to

erect a new car showroom there, as premises for Universal Motors Limited, a subsidiary firm which he had established.

The City Council building register does not record an architect for this building, but there is little doubt that it was designed by Atkinson and Conrad. The architect Henry Wallace Atkinson was a director of the Howard Motor Company, who were regular clients of Atkinson and Conrad.

This was a brick building of two storeys and a basement. The limited available photographic evidence suggests that the façade was a fairly simple one in face-brick, with some cement facings, beneath a pedimented parapet. A cantilevered awning sheltered the ground floor, which housed the offices and showrooms. Specially constructed ramps gave vehicular access to both the upper floor and to the servicing department in the basement.

In 1930 Cossey Motors took over this building, and they remained here for many years.

D10. Former HENRY BERRY & COMPANY

Address: 310-316 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1929-30

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Office of the Brisbane City Architect (Alfred Herbert Foster)

Builder: James and Walter Maskrey

Status: Demolished in the early 1980s

References:

BCC building register no.20118, 22/10/1929.



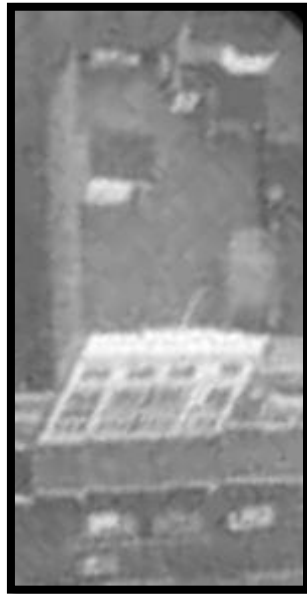
Under construction

In 1897 the firm of Henry Berry & Company, butchers' and bakers' merchants, established a branch in Brisbane, in premises in Edward Street. In 1914-15 they erected a new building at 310 Adelaide Street, designed for them by the architectural partnership of Claude Chambers and Lange Powell. It was a brick building of four storeys, with a flat roof and steel girders supporting the floors. The yard at the rear was roofed in glass to permit work in all weathers. An early photo shows that the façade was in four bays, of face-brick, apparently with polychrome cement facings at the two lower levels.

In 1926 the allotment was resumed for street-widening, and Henry Berry & Company erected new premises on the other side of Adelaide Street. The City Council truncated the allotment, but could not find a buyer for the building, which would have to be remodelled by the new owners. In 1929 the council decided to undertake the remodelling themselves, and called for tenders. The work commenced late in 1929, and was supervised by the City Architect.

The limited available photographic evidence shows that the four bays of the façade were retained, and clearly articulated by pilasters. The frontage rose to a prominent cornice, with a parapet above. There was a cantilevered awning at ground level.

During the Depression years, the Council struggled to find a tenant for this building, but there was a parking station here in the late 1930s. After the Second World War, the building became home to the Lombard Insurance Company and was named Lombard House.



Aerial photo, 1969

D11. VICTOR DAY

Address: 318-320 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1930

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Atkinson, Powell and Conrad

Builder: Horace Sanham

Status: Demolished in the early 1980s

References:

BCC building register no.21260, 2/5/1930.



1931

The sign writer Victor Day had established himself in Adelaide Street around 1901, initially in premises in Kent's Buildings (B1). In 1923-24 he had a new brick building erected at 318 Adelaide Street, consisting of two shops at ground level, a basement and an upper floor. This building was designed by Atkinson and Conrad. In 1926 the City Council resumed the allotment and entered into negotiations with the owner. These seem to have turned out very favourably for Day, who eventually repurchased the property for about half the amount which he received in compensation.

The remodelling of the adjacent Adelaide House (D12) allowed Day to obtain an easement at the rear, although this meant that his building had to be truncated at both the front and the rear. It appears that the remodelling of the building also involved the addition of an extra floor, perhaps to compensate for lost space.

The remodelling was supervised by Atkinson, Powell and Conrad. The design was suitably artistic, with a bay window on the second level, and an unusually large parapet used (appropriately) as a billboard.



About 1962

D12. ADELAIDE HOUSE

Address: 322-332 Adelaide Street (cnr Wharf Street), Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1930-31

Nature of Project: Remodelling

Architect: Office of the Brisbane City Architect (Alfred Herbert Foster)

Builder: Andrew Lind and Son

Status: Demolished about 1959

References:

BCC building register [unnumbered], 24/12/1930.

Telegraph (Brisbane), 13 February 1931, first edition, p.9.

Brisbane Courier, 25 November 1931, p.16.



1952

In 1914 a building was erected on the southwest corner of Adelaide and Wharf Streets for the Brisbane architect, Frank Longland, who owned that allotment jointly with his sister. Longland designed the three-storey brick building as shops and offices, but a portion of the two upper floors was subsequently developed as a boarding house known as the Adelaide House Private Hotel.

In 1926 the City Council moved to resume this property for street-widening. Having truncated the allotment on the Adelaide Street frontage, they were unable to find a buyer for the building, which still had to be remodelled. Finally in 1930 the Council decided to undertake the remodelling themselves, and called for tenders.

The work was supervised by the City Architect. The stanchions and joists of the structure were clearly expressed in the façade on the Adelaide Street frontage, the former as rendered pilasters with capitals. They were infilled with face-brick and tall steel windows. This was very similar to Longland's original design of the building, however the new façade rose to an entablature, surmounted by a cornice and low parapet. The Wharf Street corner was bevelled, with a decorative parapet embellished with festoons. The shorter Wharf Street frontage was probably little altered.

A tram junction was constructed at this intersection, as part of the street improvements. The tram signal-cabin which was installed on the corner awning of Adelaide House in 1931 certainly did nothing to enhance the appearance of the building.

There were shops at the ground level, beneath the cantilevered awning. The upper floors were leased out by the City Council as a private hotel, with a smoking room on the second level and a dining room and drawing room on the third level. The shared bathrooms on the second and third levels were served by a hot-water system.

In 1949 the Federal Government purchased this building from the City Council, and it was eventually demolished to erect the new Taxation Building, which was opened in 1962. At eleven storeys, this structure reached the maximum height then allowed under Brisbane's building regulations.



1958

E1. CHURCH OF ENGLAND BUILDINGS (ETON PRIVATE HOTEL)

Address: 336-350 Adelaide Street (cnr Wharf Street), Brisbane, Qld

Built: 1929-30

Nature of Project: New building

Architect: Lange Leopold Powell (Atkinson, Powell and Conrad)

Builder: John Hutchinson

Status: Demolished around 1990

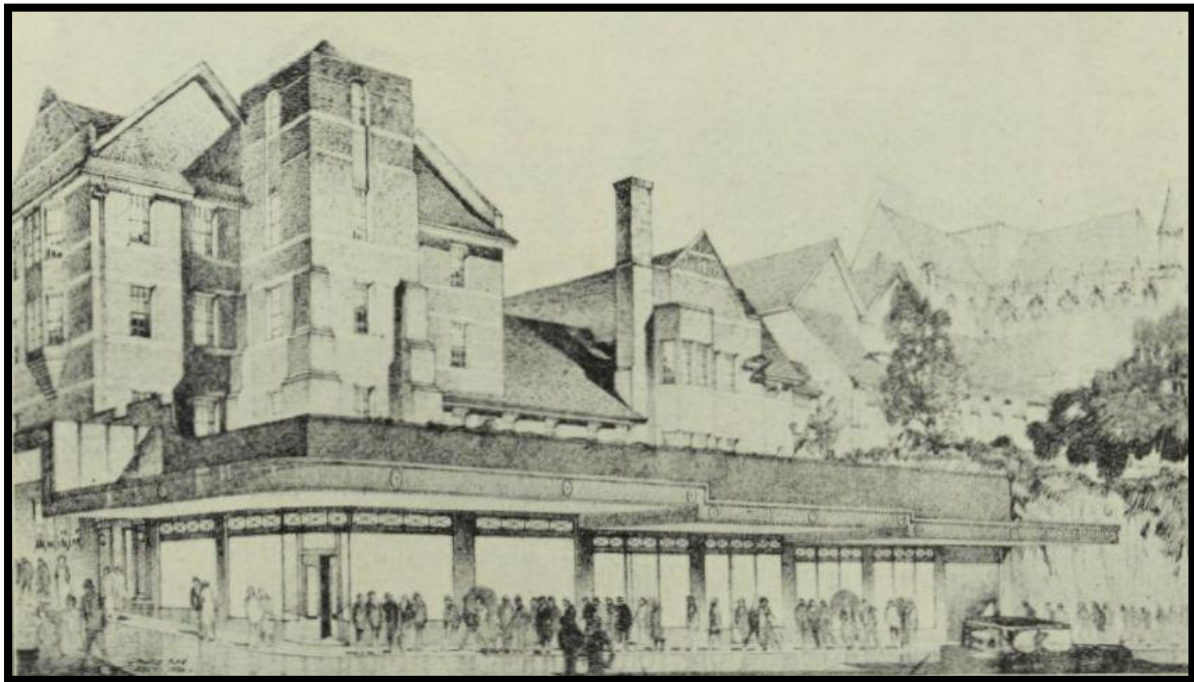
References:

BCC building register no.18939, 31/5/1929.

Brisbane Courier, 21 May 1929, p.18.

Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland, 10 September 1930, p.28-29.

Brisbane Courier, 16 September 1930, p.3.



Perspective drawing of original design

At the elevated site on the north-west corner of Adelaide and Wharf Streets stood one of the landmarks of the early township of Brisbane, the Congregational Church, erected in 1860 as the Independent Chapel, to a design by Charles Tiffin. This building was enlarged in 1872 by John Petrie, acting as both architect and builder, and further improvements were made in 1883 and 1899. By 1924 the church had become too small, and it was decided to sell the land to the adjacent St John's Anglican Cathedral. In 1927-28 a new City Congregational Church Hall was erected at 409 Adelaide Street, to a design by Lange Powell. The old building was demolished in 1928, the City Council obligingly excavated the Adelaide Street frontage to the new alignment, and the Anglican authorities set about the redevelopment of the site.

The large complex of buildings which was erected here in 1929-30 was intended, among other things, to provide nurses' quarters for St Martin's Hospital, which stood in Ann Street, beside the cathedral. The hospital had been designed by Lange Powell in a very English Arts-and-Crafts style, and it was intended that the new buildings should harmonise with the existing hospital. This no doubt explains why Powell was selected as architect for this project. Soon after completion, the Eton Private Hotel was established within this complex, which became known by that name, or more simply as Eton House.

It was a complicated structure, with shop-fronts along Adelaide Street. The floors above were recessed back from Adelaide Street, leaving a flat roof above the shops. Behind the shops was a parking garage accessed at the rear from Wharf Street. Above that were two floors of residential accommodation, and the topmost level provided rooms for the Moreton Club (on the Wharf Street side) and nurses' quarters for St Martin's Hospital (on the side away from Wharf Street, adjacent to and connected with the hospital). Like the hospital, the new buildings were built of brick with a steeply pitched tile roof. The string courses, projecting windows, chimney, and shingle tiles in the gables all show the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement. It was reported that "the building has created a good deal of interest on account of its uncommon design."¹



Early 1950s

¹ *Architectural and Building Journal of Queensland*, 10 September 1930, p.29.